
Air is drawn through body and fibre
of carpet at terrific speed. Carries
all dust, dirt, grit, germs, etc., into
the Cleaner. No dust in room, it all
goes into Cleaner. Supersedes broom,
brush, sweeper, dust pan and
dust cloth. Cleans, Sweeps and
Dusts in one operation. Keeps
house clean, does
away with house-
cleaning. Portable,
dustless, always
ready. Adapted to
every home—rich or
poor—city, village or
country. Does same
work as expensive
machines. Costs
nothing to operate—costs
nothing for repairs.
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Only $2.0
a Month
with 30,000, with five million doll
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PATTERNS

VOLUME 2



SPECIAL RECOGNITION

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Susanna Defever

The creation of art is a lonely endeavor. The artist as unappreciated outsider is a convention developed by early Modernists and ruefully acknowledged today by our use of the term "starving artist sale." And so when artists gather to celebrate achievement, even a lifetime of achievement, they tend to think of individual accomplishment. However, Susanna Defever's great achievement has been her commitment not only to the arts but to the arts community. While she is the self-styled "occasional poet" — and a very good one — it is the success of community rather than the individual that is her gift to *Patterns*.

Patterns would not be in your hands today, would not be the longest continuously published community college literary and arts magazine in Michigan, were it not for the efforts of Susanna and people like her, who acted in concert to create, year after year, this wonderful little showcase of student art and literature. Susanna worked on *Patterns* when it was hand-collated, and her energy helped drive the magazine through the difficult economic times of the early 1980s. The financial problems that threatened the existence of the magazine spurred the creation of a group called *Friends of Patterns*, which today we know as the Friends of the Arts. The group supports not only *Patterns* but myriad arts programs. She is probably cringing as she reads this, wishing this were a group acknowledgment. Susanna is a people person.

At times, though, Susanna did act alone — but when she did it was for the benefit of the whole. She was the first magazine advisor to submit a copy of *Patterns* to the Community College Humanities Association Literary Magazine Competition in 1997. Her submission resulted in a third-place award for the Midwest division, which comprised more than a dozen states and provinces. Occasionally, Susanna would slyly submit an unknowing student's literary work to *Patterns* judges, to encourage a talented but shy writer. Acting alone or in concert with others, though, Susanna has never wavered from her commitment to the arts.

Ultimately, Susanna's achievement is an achievement of her generosity — with her time, her money, her talent, and, most of all, her spirit. That generosity is born of her passion for art — not only the individual's passion to create, but the passion to connect us. And that is what art does. It connects us, in ways computers never will. As Susanna herself has written, "The race for superior technology has left us with our humanity far behind. The arts remind us of our humanity, preserve our culture, and extend our values to succeeding generations."

Susanna's legacy — one that is not complete, as she remains a bright and active star in our presence — lies not only in the pages of this magazine, but in the hearts of the students, colleagues, family and friends whose passion for the arts has been stoked by this lovely and incomparable woman.

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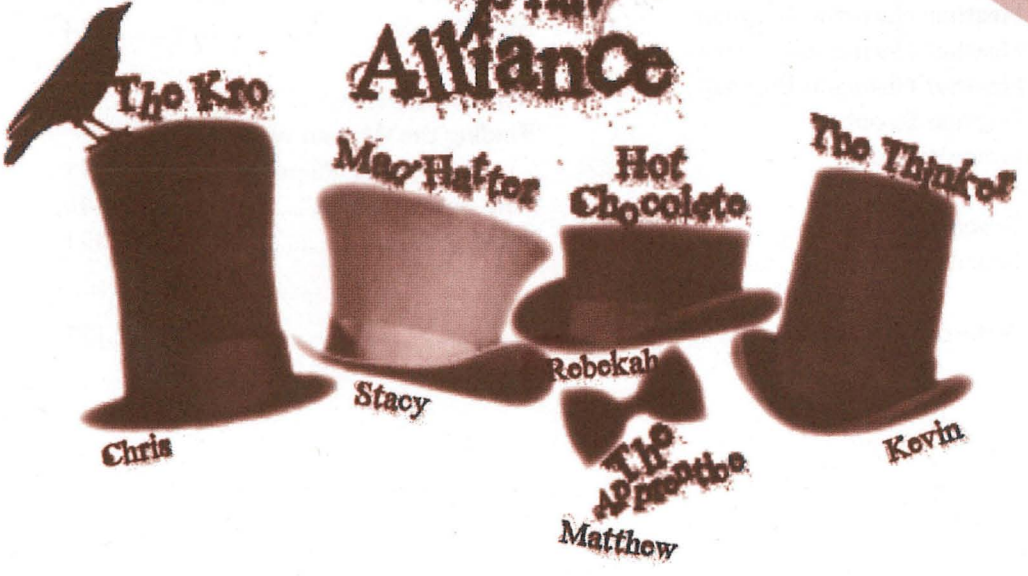
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This is the second of two volumes comprising the golden anniversary edition of *Patterns* magazine. The first volume looks back over the first 49 years of this magazine's existence; this volume, more like a typical edition, features the writing and artwork of current SC4 students. Our intention is that these two volumes be regarded as a matched set. The reader may note the distinctive designs: the retrospective volume communicating a classic collegiate look and feel, while the latter's qualities are more edgy, evoking the aesthetics of the twenty-first century. Taken together, their message is of a publication that remembers its roots but is moving dynamically into the future.

As always, this is a juried publication, meaning that panels of judges have selected for inclusion only the poems, stories, essays, and artworks that they feel show special artistic merit. Moreover, our visiting authors (see below) from outside the college have made the final judgments about which written works merited the top awards in each category. We've also invited several of our most distinguished *Patterns* writers of the past to submit new works included in this issue's Alumni section. Thanks to grants from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs and (for the first time) from the National Endowment for the Arts, we are very fortunate to have three outstanding writers with national and international reputations acting as visiting judges: Mike Magnuson, Michael Perry, and Franz Wright. A look at the biographical notes on each of these authors will show you why we are practically bursting with pride to have three such accomplished writers visiting our campus.

Finally, we draw attention to note the restoration of the Blanche Redman Award for Poetry in this year's edition. As explained in the preface to volume one of the 50th edition, the Redman Award was (temporarily) discontinued after its endowment was depleted a few years ago. In this anniversary year to honor the founder of *Patterns*, the magazine's staff has elected to restore this award and to move the Nickerson Award to the essay category.

Along with bringing back proper recognition to Blanche Redman, this change brings with it a fitting sense of completion, since now for the first time *Patterns* has a "name" award for each genre of writing/art included. One might almost say that the pattern has at last been completed.



This volume is dedicated to Blanche Redman, the founder of Patterns magazine, and to all of those SC4/PHJC faculty, staff, and students who have for a half-century continued the work that she began.

Patrick Bourke Fine Arts Award

Kevin Stabenow

The Patrick Bourke Award honors an art student who has made a commitment to pursue an advanced degree in one of the visual art disciplines and has been an advocate and emissary for "art" at St. Clair County Community College. This year's recipient is Kevin Stabenow, who has been the Visual and Performing Arts Department Design Intern. In this capacity, he has been responsible for all the posters and visual marketing for the Fine Arts Galleries, the Symphonic Band Concerts, the Noon Concert Series and all Theatre productions. Kevin has worn a path between the student design lab and the college marketing office and the many faculty members who are responsible for coordinating the productions in all of these disciplines. The Fine Arts Building has been a constant echo of "Wow! Have you seen Kevin's new poster?" Audiences and performers have collected his posters and some day these will be known as the body of early design work by Kevin Stabenow.

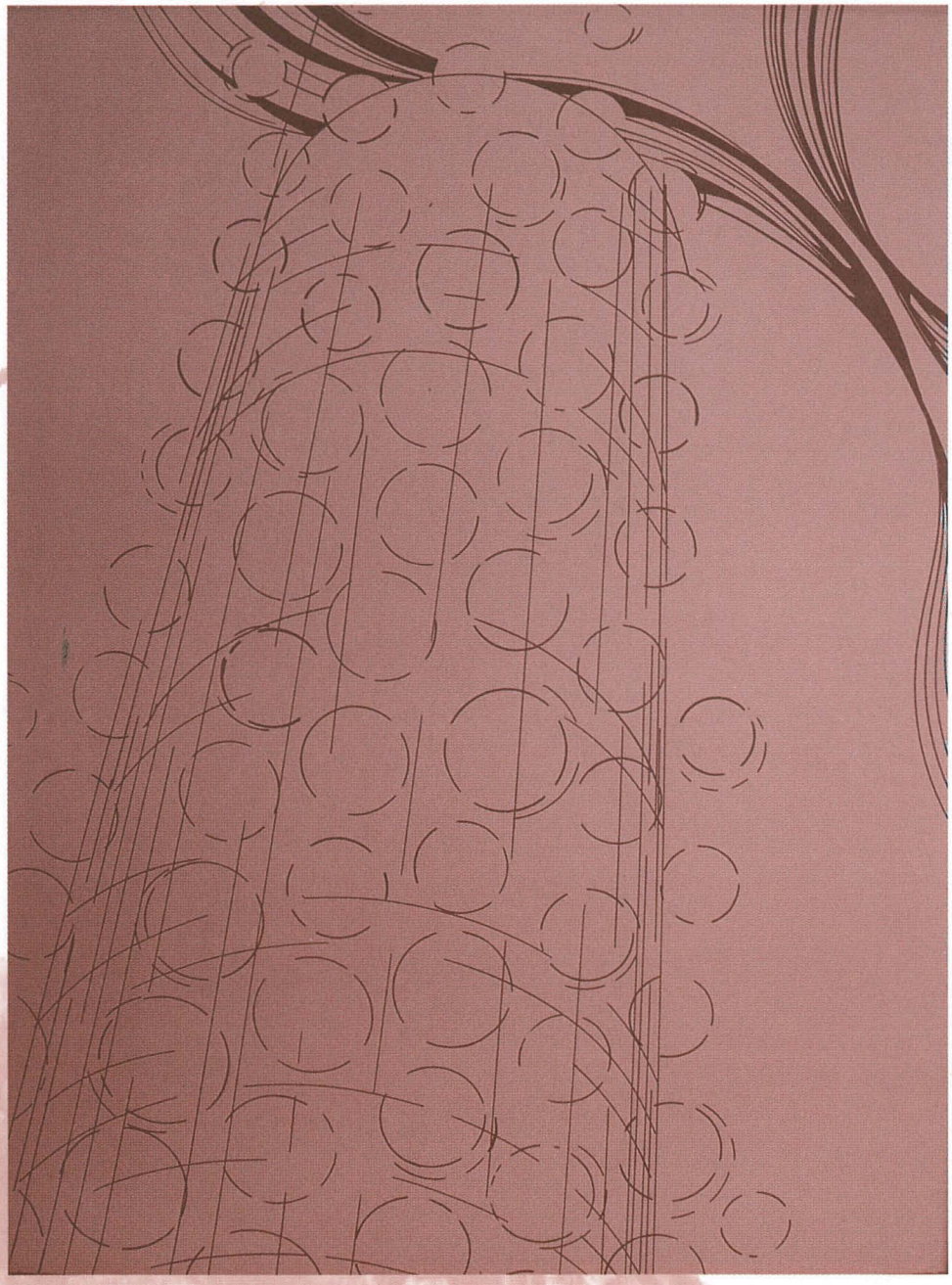
When Kevin started at the college, he wasn't sure just what was happening or how to define design, but he was wide eyed and prepared to work — never missing a class or deadline. When he was first asked to give a brief profile of his background, he talked of his grandfather, who was a local sign painter with his own business. This was in the time of hand layout and hand painting when no one was thinking about a digital age or a computer. Kevin inherited his grandfather's tools and books and has through them found an inspired connection to the past even as he has explored the tools and directions of his own time. As you turn the pages of this the 50th Anniversary edition of *Patterns*, note that Kevin was a member of the student design team, which layed out this publication. Kevin Stabenow is all about design.

Two years ago, Kevin contacted our college after he had an interview at the College for Creative Studies in Detroit. It was their suggestion that he complete an associate degree from St. Clair County Community College and then transfer to their school to complete a bachelor's degree in graphic design. The first phase of this plan is almost complete, and we wish Kevin well as he ventures into the greater world with his posters and a well-prepared portfolio.

Maise Silo

eric conner

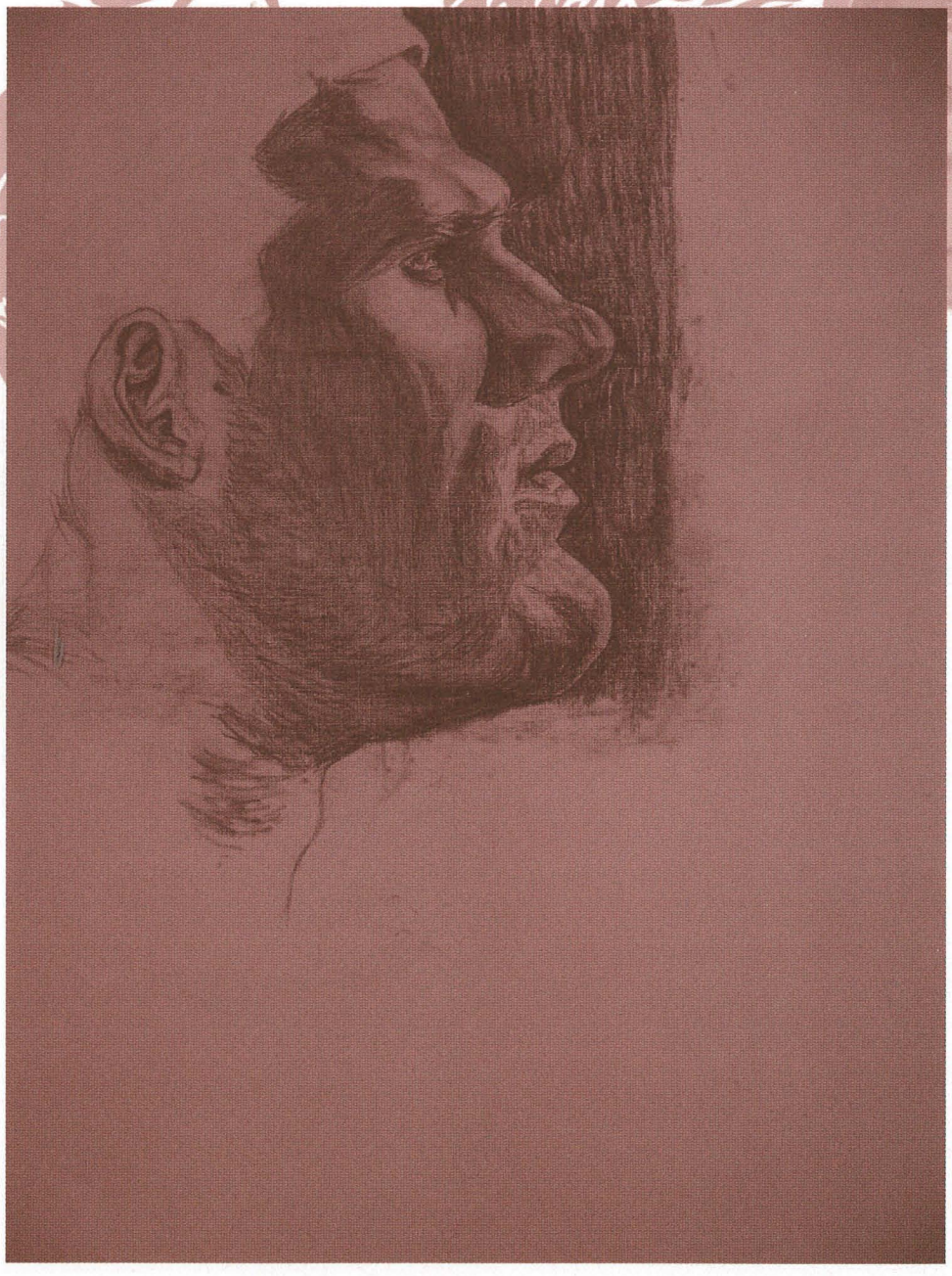
First Place Art



Jacob

XING HANG

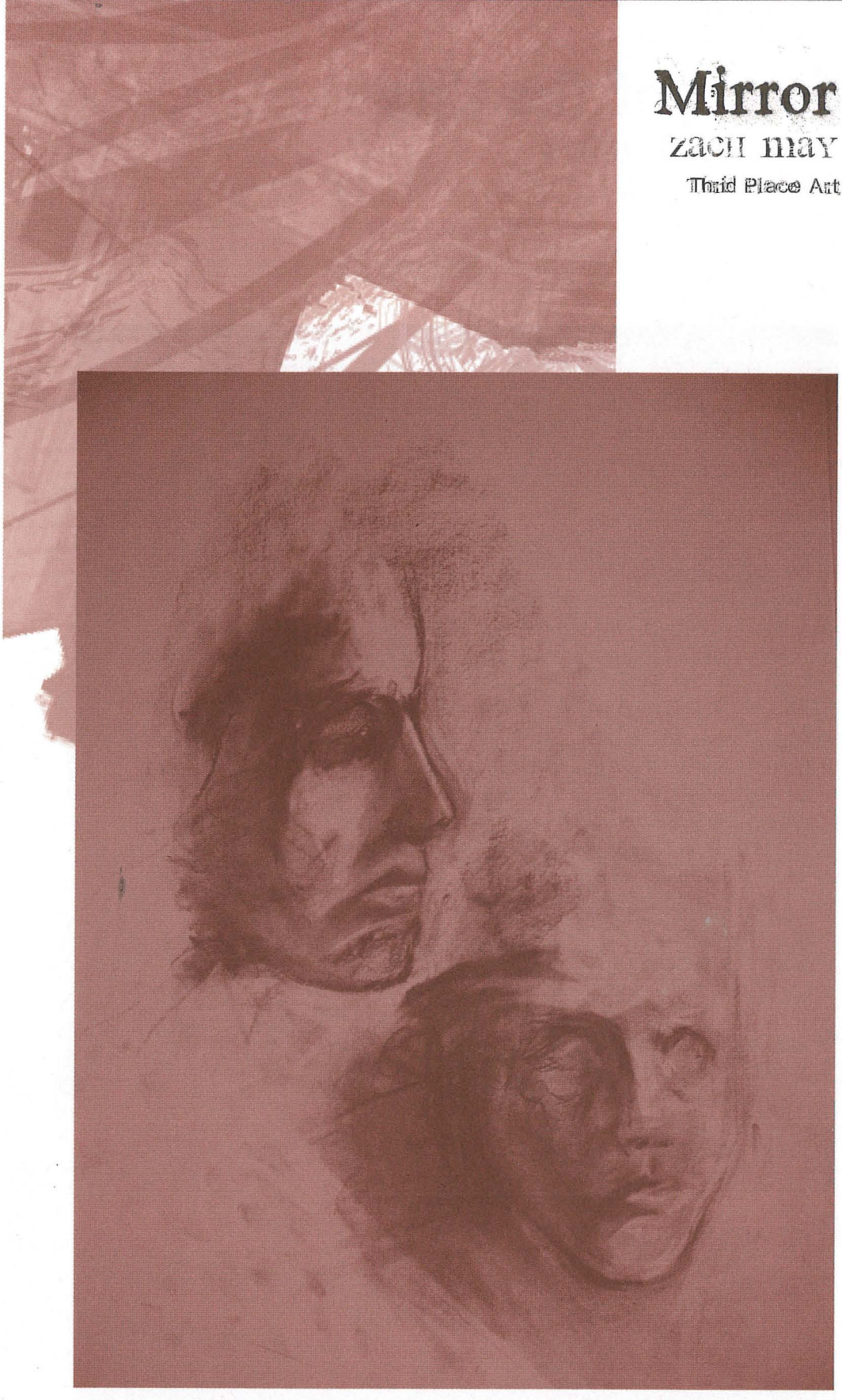
Second Place Art



Mirror

zach may

Third Place Art



Heart of the City

ARNOLD E. KOONTZ

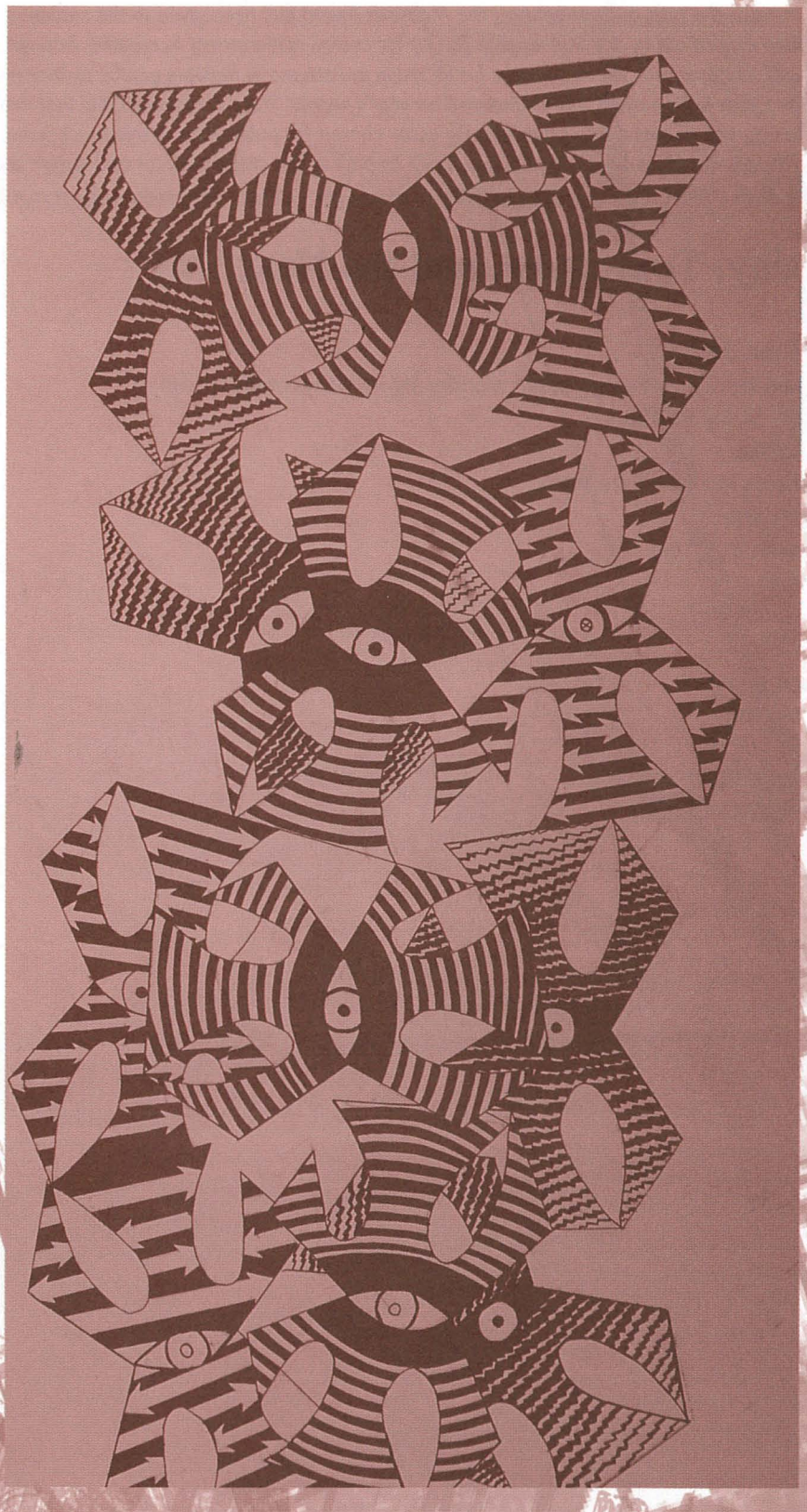
Honorable Mention



Eyes

Dave Worden

Honorable Mention



Eleanor Mathews Award

STACY SCHLAUDRAFF

For the past quarter-century, the Mathews Award has been given to the student who has been singled out by the SC4 English faculty for overall achievement in creative writing. Traditionally, students with works selected for inclusion in Patterns in multiple genres or over more than one year have earned this distinction. This year's winner, Stacy Schlaudraff, fits that description, having two poems and a prize-winning essay chosen for publication in this year's issue. Given Stacy's countless hours of volunteer work as part of the student layout and design team for the 50th edition, it is especially gratifying to award her Patterns' longest-standing recognition.

Today, Tomorrow, and the Next Day

It's in the details.
Do you ever go through a day wondering if you're really living?
Apathy in my blankets.
My coffee,
My futon, my off-white walls,
My pay check.
What defines me?
My car?
My education?
My job?
My garbage.
My address,
I am a number.
000 dash 00 dash 0000
S-S-N, D-O-B,
S-H-I-T.
Take a number
Stand in line
Wait.
Items purchased by the grocery shopper in front of me.
Tampons, organic whole grain bread,
Single wrapped veggie burger, pre-washed romaine lettuce,
Health magazine, energy drink,
Family-sized, double stuffed Oreos.
Should I get some gum?
Apathy in my debt card,
My overdraft statement,
My toothpaste, my overweight mailman
My next-day diet plans.
Who am I?
I am my Nyquil.
My popcorn dinner.
My Seinfeld reruns.
I am under my apathetic blankets once again.

Popping

ANDREW GOTZON

Richard Colwell Fiction Award

"Popping" is an excellent metaphor for the working life, the life wherein we spend our days or nights performing often ridiculous tasks just to make a buck. Selling shoes. Changing oil. Waiting tables. Selling popcorn in the park. Here, the popcorn speaks to the popcorn vendor — a ridiculous occurrence in a ridiculous life — and it turns out that the popcorn wants to be popped! How could this be? The vendor (and this is the wisdom of the story) can't quite figure it out but decidedly knows what to do about it: He dumps the unpopped popcorn in the grass. The story's last line is particularly bleak and is therefore a perfect way to bring this disturbing piece to a close.

— Mike Magnuson

Across the street, the red hand disappeared and was replaced by a light blue walking man, giving me limited time to get my cart across before traffic continued. Sitting on my cart was a popcorn machine, a bottle of popping oil, a box of toppings, and a bucket filled with sixteen pounds of kernels.

The road had never seemed bumpy, but it did when I had a cart to push. It was bouncing violently, so I tried to keep the machine stable with my free hand. I guided it to the other side, only for the cart to smack into the curb, knocking the bucket to the ground. The lid shot off, and sixteen pounds of shiny little kernels spilled all over the pavement. It appeared I could no longer make popcorn. I picked up the empty bucket and put it back on the cart. Just as I was about to push the cart back across the street, I heard a voice.

"Hey, you! Hold up a second. Hear me out. Now I know that what just happened was an accident, but let me tell you something. Every day I sit here with my friends, and there's one thing we all look forward to — popping. We've watched the outside world, and we've seen our friends go through it. We all knew that one day, we'd all get heated up in a kettle until we exploded. We knew that our innards would turn inside out and become white and puffy. It's supposed to feel very good — not that you'd understand the feeling."

I replied that I might have an idea of what it felt like. People went through a lot so they could "pop" too.

"Well, yes, then you can understand why we were so excited. So today we were waiting quietly when we felt the bumps, and next thing we knew, we were all falling. Now we're on the concrete, and because of this, it seems that you now find us unfit for popping."

I confirmed this, saying nobody wanted to eat dirty popcorn.

"Well, alas! I never expected to die like this. I always thought I'd get to pop. Then I'd be covered with some kind of tasty topping — salt, butter, maybe even powdered cheese — and find myself in a bag, with several of my friends, as we were each chewed up. That part sounded painful, but it would have been glorious. But I guess that was all a naïve little fantasy. Look where we are now!

"I guess I should just accept this fate. Who knows? Maybe this little kernel I'm residing in will decompose, and I'll become something else. Maybe… I can become… a kernel again. Except this time… I'll get… to pop…" The street corner went silent.

After returning the cart to my storage room, I returned with a broom and a dustpan. I swept up as many kernels as I could. There was a trash can nearby. I started walking toward it, but stopped. I saw a patch of grass a few feet away, so I poured the kernels on top. I swept up the remaining kernels and poured them in the grass. I didn't have a shovel to bury them, but I felt I had done as much as I could.

Drive By

JOSH TIEHL

First Place Story

This story's intelligence (and wit) grows from the way its details suggest multiple meanings. We have a literal set of events: a few people going outside and getting hosed on the street with a Supersoaker. And into this we have Anarchists, 18th Century smut novels, Parisian sculpture, someone named Sadaat, and a drummer with a drug problem. When the violence occurs and it turns out that the violence isn't really all that violent, the reader feels relieved for the characters but terrified for the future of the world.

— Mike Magnuson

I had just spent the last three hours inside a sweaty, dirty, stinking, and poorly ventilated Anarchist compound, and now I just wanted to get the hell out of Detroit. We stood in one of the anarchists' kitchen, surrounded by other anarchists. The kitchen was about four feet wide and had a small white table in the center. In the middle of the table sat a bowl of moldy fruit. One of the anarchists started to throw bruised Clementines at his anarchist girlfriend. The smell of vinegar permeated the room.

Sadaat finally entered the room. I shot him the "let's get the fuck out of here" look. He said goodbye to the anarchist that had set up the show that he had just played. We left. On the way out there was a giant plaster of Paris sculpture of a woman leaping out of the wall. It was covered with the pages of an 18th century smut novel and was titled "Rape".

We crossed the street and started walking in the direction of my car. As we reached the cross-street of the intersection, a tall gangly man called out to Sadaat. He introduced himself to me as Frank. I don't know if that was his real name, and I didn't really care. He seemed like someone better off not knowing. He started to engage Sadaat in a banal conversation. Something about setting up a show when his drummer got clean.

They continued talking as we crossed the street to my parked car. I unlocked the doors as Frank continued to talk. Sadaat patiently listened as he always does. It was about then that the headlights of a car approached. I don't really know much about cars and wasn't sure what kind of car it was.

Rather than listen to Frank, I began to concentrate on the car.

'Wouldn't it be a little funny if it was a Caddy and they just rolled up and shot at us,' I thought to myself. You see, my father always used to worry that we would be involved in a drive-by every time my friends and I would go down to Detroit when we were in high school.

Frank continued to talk so I unlocked the doors of the car with my remote, hoping the 'beep-beep' would signal Frank to shut the fuck up so we could leave. I kept my eyes on the headlights as the car approached. Was it a cop?

When the car crossed under the intersection I realized it was a Caddy. Frank droned and droned as the car reached us. That's when I saw the young black kid leaning out the window as he hollered at us.

"What the fuck" started to come out of my mouth as I saw what looked to be a pistol in his hand, pointed directly at us. He opened fire before we could move.

I didn't know what to expect. I had never been shot before, so I could

only imagine what it felt like. Maybe being pummeled with screwdrivers? Or being ripped up by a fishhook? I braced myself; what I felt was completely unexpected.

Wetness.

The front of my shirt was wet.

And my left sleeve was drenched.

From the spray of water. From a water gun. Not a dime store plastic toy, either. This was one of those super-soaking water guns that just happened to look a little bit like a real pistol. The young kid and his friends laughed as they passed us.

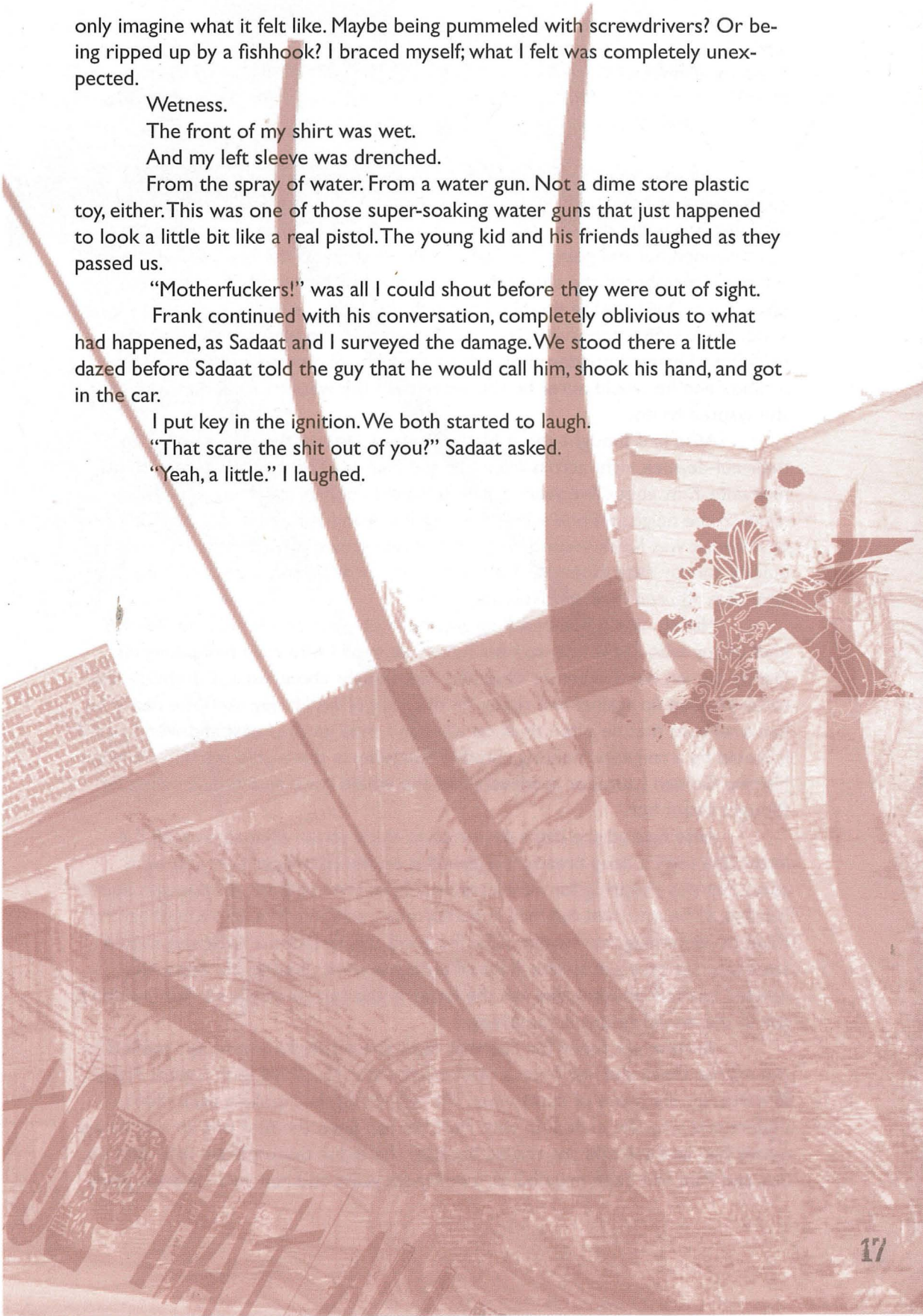
"Motherfuckers!" was all I could shout before they were out of sight.

Frank continued with his conversation, completely oblivious to what had happened, as Sadaat and I surveyed the damage. We stood there a little dazed before Sadaat told the guy that he would call him, shook his hand, and got in the car.

I put key in the ignition. We both started to laugh.

"That scare the shit out of you?" Sadaat asked.

"Yeah, a little." I laughed.



The Letter

MELISSA GALLOP

Second Place Story

This quietly wonderful short story captures the type of nagging regret that besets many middle-aged people. Where has my life gone? Why did I end up this way? Why am I so bored? The answers, of course, are unanswerable, and Alise's subtle way of pondering the unanswerable is remarkably moving.

— Mike Magnuson

All days were pretty much the same; of course some days Alise would go shopping or have lunch with a friend, but nothing significant. Today was no different; it was the day she was going to look for new living room furniture. Alise planned her day going from one furniture store to the next. She got in the car and remembered she should check the mailbox before she heads out, as she often does. Quickly, Alise thumbed through the mail to see if there was anything good. Nope, nope, nope, wait. That one is addressed to Nathan McIntyre, the neighbor. Her mind pondered on it for a moment. She could just put it in his mailbox and he would never be the wiser, but Alise wasn't sure if that was what she wanted to do.

Alise had thought about Nathan before. He had the nicest home on their cul-de-sack, right across from her and Paul. He had moved there with his new wife, Kim, about five years ago. Alise baked cookies for them to welcome them to the neighborhood when they moved in and learned it was Nathan's first marriage, it was Kim's second, and she had two grown boys. News got around quickly shortly thereafter that Kim was having an affair and it wasn't long thereafter that she and Nathan divorced.

Nathan was a good looking guy, in his early fifties. He seemed like the kind of guy who knew how to have fun. Alise would often see him taking his Harley out on warm summer days, She had thought about what it might be like to be pressed up against him riding on the back of his Harley. And she heard he had a sailboat that he often took on weekend trips up the coast and wondered if it would be a romantic floating paradise. Sometimes she would see him walking his two Golden Labrador retrievers and she would wave and wonder what he thought about her.

Alise figured she had a day or so to think about what to so with the letter. She took a deep breath and placed it on the passenger seat and went about her day shopping for new furniture. From time to time, she thought about Nathan, if she returned the mail in person she could see him. She would have to think of something that would make for good conversation. Maybe she should stare into his eyes just a little. A lot of thoughts went through her head, she needed to think about it. She left the letter in the car overnight so Paul wouldn't see it; she would return it tomorrow.

As Alise got ready for bed that night she washed her face and looked in the mirror. Once she had been a real looker, naturally blond, with a great figure. She had her fair share of dates when she was young, but looking back didn't understand why she ended up with Paul. He had been the first one to ask her to marry him and she said yes, maybe because she didn't think anyone ever said no. She and Paul had been married for twenty-six years and had two children, Jenny

and Paul Jr., who both flew the coop soon after college. Now she was pushing fifty and the years were beginning to show.

Life had been uneventful for far too long. Alise loved her life when the kids were growing up. She always wanted more children, but Paul said two was enough, so she thought she had better be satisfied with what she had rather than put a strain on her marriage. Being a stay-at-home mom had suited her just fine; she didn't miss the stress of the corporate job she gave up to stay at home with the kids. Besides, Paul liked coming home to a well kept home and a nice dinner after working all day. But now that Jenny and Paul Jr. were gone life had become mundane; make Paul's coffee, make the bed, do the dishes, a load of laundry, clean the house. The highlight of the day was deciding to make fish or a roast for dinner.

Paul had become a workaholic; it started when the kids were young. Paul was trying to build his business. When the kids were young sometimes money would be tight. Alise felt guilty that she didn't work; she supported Paul thoroughly when he worked long hours to make extra money. She would cut the grass and she learned to fix things around the house so there would be less maintenance for Paul to do. Paul would come home right after business closed at six o'clock and go straight into his office to do paperwork and make phone calls. Alise would let him know when dinner was ready; Paul would show up, eat and be back in his office again before Alise was done cutting things up for the kids and could take two bites, so she often finished her meal alone. Paul never even seemed to notice. He never seemed to have time for her. It had been years since they had taken a vacation together, and even when they did take a vacation they were uneventful. The years passed and she and Paul had grown apart. Alise never suspected another woman; Paul didn't seem interested. She figured he loved money more than he loved her.

The following morning came, Alise made Paul's coffee. She went about her morning routine making the bed and throwing in a load of laundry. Then she needed to get ready for a dentist appointment she had made months ago. Alise spent a little extra time on her hair and makeup; she wanted to look extra good that day. She decided to wear her favorite blouse; it would be appropriate because the neckline was just a little low. As she was finishing getting dressed Paul came in the room. He smiled and told her that was his favorite blouse, then said his usual "Goodbye, I'll be home after work."

Alise finished getting ready and headed out the door. She got in the car and stared at the letter. She picked it up and sat thinking about the perfect thing to say, and about the look she was going to give Nathan. Would he understand what she was doing? All the thoughts she had been thinking swam through her mind. She sat and pondered it so long she was going to be late for her appointment. Alise slowly backed down the driveway and turned the wrong direction; she stopped at Nathan's mailbox so she could put the letter in and drove away.

Pickle Jar Incident

amanda smith

Nickerson Award

The tension that builds throughout this piece is a direct result of the quietly observed elements of dysfunctional domesticity (a harried mother striving hard to please and provide, an overworked and apparently menacing father looking for supper and maybe trouble) set against vivid details closely noted (the cherry Kool-Aid, the red ketchup, the paper plates). A claustrophobic sense of inevitability pervades the narrative, even as the characters simply sit at a table and eat. When the evening finally erupts, we cannot help but jump, even though we knew this was coming all along.

— Michael Perry

Kielbasa was on the menu for the evening, and the smell was everywhere. The kitchen with sunflowers everywhere was the center of the house that evening. My mother was there, running from cupboard to cupboard. I sat at the table and watched her. Her face was scrunched in a confused sort of way, and her eyes were only seeing the jumbles in her brain. Her hands moved swiftly and effortlessly; she had made this meal a million times before. She reminded me of my kindergarten teacher in the fact that they both seemed to hate their jobs today. I had been reprimanded at school; my friend Cassandra and I liked to stretch our vocal cords along with our young legs. I was in an uneasy state. Lingering with the odor of polish meat was a deeper, dark aroma. A mix of anger and disease lay just below the surface, virtually undetected.

The dinner table was set with four paper plates. A glass was put in front of each setting, and a fork beside each plate. My mother got out the pitcher of cherry Kool-Aid, the ketchup, and the kosher baby dill pickles. She called for my sister and my father.

My 11 year old sister came in from the hallway. She was covered up with pink pajamas that zipped up the front and was trailing a fleece blanket behind her. She belonged in a St. Jude's infomercial. Her face was swollen and her nose was bright red. Dried snot lay beneath it. I made a face at her when she sat down. She had been sick for a couple days now, and it was killing my spirit.

My dad reeked of a long day at work. He slowly made his way into the kitchen. His eyes were red and half closed. His wrinkles seemed to be more defined than usual; they were rivers jutting through valleys of stubble, instead of streams. His curly hair was verging on an afro, jostled about on his tired head. He was wearing his usual flannel work shirt, but pajama bottoms lay beneath it.

I twitched uncontrollably, my legs moving back and forth rapidly under the table.

The kielbasa was served. My mother cut my piece into little circles. I made a large pile of ketchup on one side of my plate. Parallel to the ketchup and meat I had a gathering of fifteen baby dill spears. They were delicious. We ate.

"I don't feel good," my sister said. She had barely touched the food on her plate, and she had been sniffling around each bite that reached her lips.

"It's okay, Stephanie, go back to bed," my mother said softly. She looked at my sister with concern.

My father did a maniacal half-laugh. "She's fine, she needs to eat. Just get her some Tylenol, Jesus Christ," he snapped. My mother's blue eyes whipped to meet his bloodshot ones.

"She took medicine earlier. She ate enough, and she can leave," she said. Her voice was strained and whiny, as she struggled to conjure up the strength to stand on her ground.

My sister looked feebly between our two parents. She started to get teary and anxious. She slowly got up, and left the room the way she came.

I finished my pickles and stared at my plate. My parents were locked in a silent battle. Their eyes were fixed, and an invisible stream of words and feelings passed between them.

At my father's throw, the pickle jar shattered on the wooden table. Glass pieces were all over. The smell of pickle juice mingled with the now openly angry aroma in the air. My mother was stoic, and my father was crazed. His half closed eyes were now wide open, and bloodier than before. He was up out of his seat, and still grasping the lidded portion of the pickle jar. He threw it into the garbage can and stormed out of the room the way he came in.

I resumed staring at my plate only so see a sharp, crystal clear shark fin peaking out of the red sea of my ketchup. The room turned to watery mush in my vision. My legs were done twitching for the night.

My mother, with a sigh, cleaned up. She got me a brand new plate with ketchup and kielbasa. No pickles gathered this time.

Being 5 isn't Easy in Layville, Ohio, 1983

STACY SCHLAUDRAFF

First Place Essay

This essay unfolds in a dreamlike state, displacing our sensibilities. From the first sentence we know there has been trouble, and that sense of foreboding lingers as the narrator flashes back to what would otherwise seem to be an innocent childhood ramble through the forest and down to a stream to catch frogs. But the sense of unease never dissipates. Rather, it seeps ever more deeply into the narrative until the sense of invisible malevolence is pervasive. The dissociative nature of the concluding paragraph matches perfectly the dysphoric feel of the piece as a whole.

— Michael Perry

It doesn't hurt so badly anymore, it hurts all the time now, something that I'm used to.

They had told me I would be fine a while ago; they told me it wasn't my fault. Mom said 48 hours isn't enough and I have to try my hardest to hold on. I don't know what they mean, but I do know it hurts.

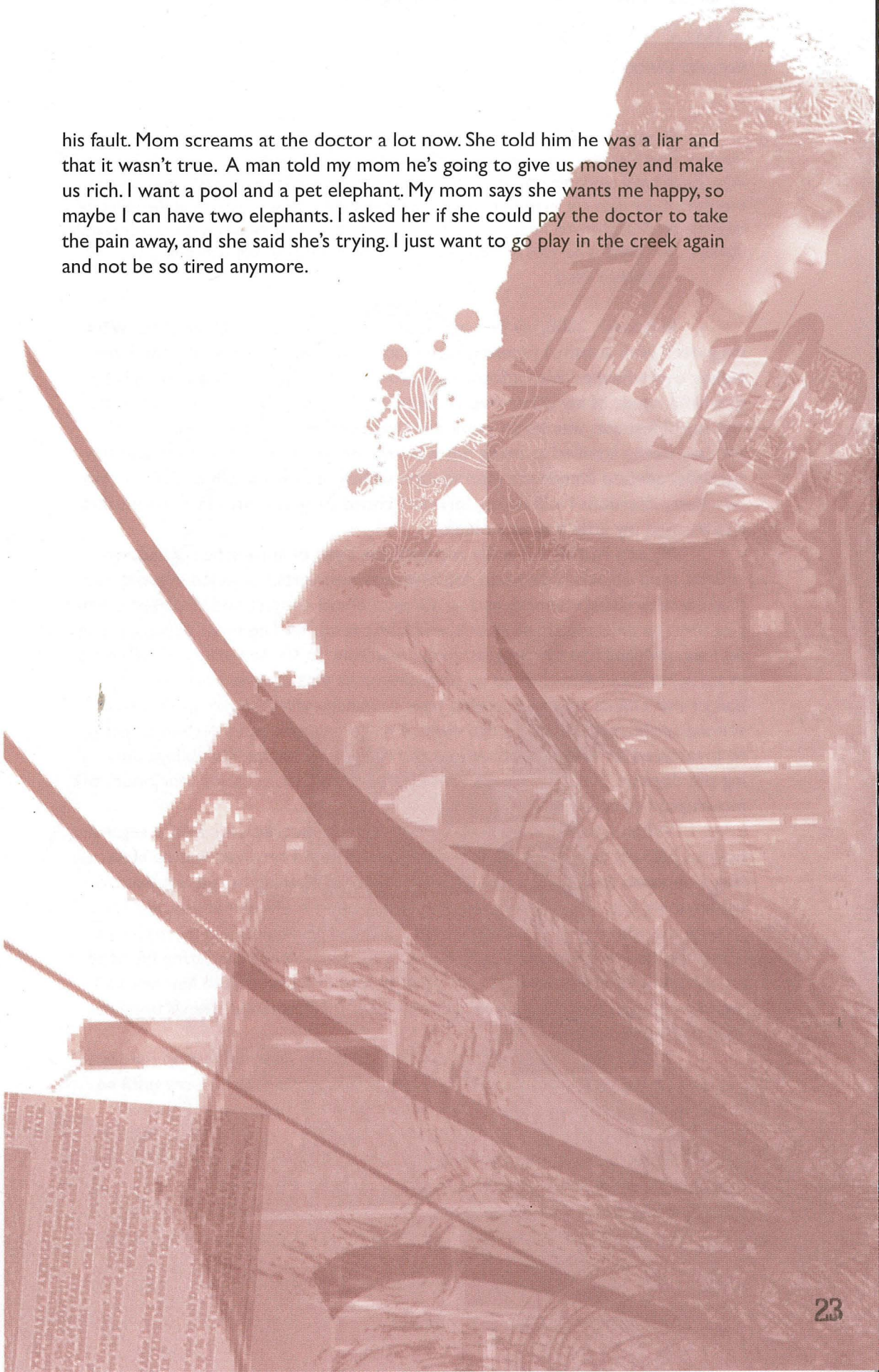
I fell that day, tripped on a tree root that grew from the ground. I could have sworn it lifted itself to slow me down. I skinned my knee. It only bled a little. You see, I had to get to the creek as fast as I could, the water was high; it had rained the night before. When it rains the frogs come out and I'm fast enough to catch them, and the deer come out too, to drink at the water's edge. But there weren't any frogs that day, and the deer were laying in the field, too tired to drink. I wadded in the water; it came to about my chest, and mom didn't care because I wore the clothes that I use to paint in.

The water was really warm, and really pretty. It glowed green from all the moss in the bottom. I dunked my head in just for a second and opened my eyes to see if the frogs were swimming. I came up real quick, though. My eyes burned like I was in Mrs. Kelic's Pool, she always put too much chlorine in. I pulled myself from the water and up on the bank and walked towards the deer in the field. I was a little scared, they were so big compared to me and I had never seen one that up close before. It didn't move, even though I was very close, I crawled on my knees, and it stung my hurt I got from the tree. The water in my shoes squeaked and I tried to hold my breath, and then I reached out to pet the mommy deer. She was cold. That's probably why she was sleeping in the hot sun, to warm up.

I was bored so I climbed down the ridge by the creek and walked the path the older kids took to go smoke and walked all the way to the end of it. Benny, my brother, said I was too afraid to walk all the way down to the gate, but I proved him wrong. He was always mean like that to me. The big gray gate stops you at the end. It has warning signs and if you look real hard you can see the big flame thing on top of a big white building. I was so tired so I sat down and when I woke up men were running and people with cameras were yelling at me, but I couldn't understand what they said. Mom was crying and she yelled at the other men that looked old and had business suits on. They gave me a clear mask and told me to breath normal. I fell asleep and don't remember the rest.

Mom said there was a spill, and she said it wasn't my fault. I was in a bright white room, like in the movies, but the nurses didn't have hats. I was really tired. Benny isn't mean anymore and he keeps saying he's sorry, and that it's all

his fault. Mom screams at the doctor a lot now. She told him he was a liar and that it wasn't true. A man told my mom he's going to give us money and make us rich. I want a pool and a pet elephant. My mom says she wants me happy, so maybe I can have two elephants. I asked her if she could pay the doctor to take the pain away, and she said she's trying. I just want to go play in the creek again and not be so tired anymore.



A Shadow Lingers

VIOLET GILBERT

Second Place Essay

Sometimes a story is best told stripped of artifice, strictly as a report from the heart. Here we have a parent writing the hardest truth: she may have failed her child and furthermore caused him everlasting damage. By presenting the narrative clearly and without adornment, the writer does not leverage us with drama but rather places us directly at the center of a dilemma predicated on the value of information over intuition. And when the die is cast and the damage done, there is no need to tease out our emotions: they are fully unbound.

— Michael Perry

In late fall, 2000, my two-year-old son and four-year-old daughter were diagnosed with autism. I received varied advice on what I should do and I was feeling overwhelmed with information. During this time, I was also struggling to meet the needs of my other two children. My baby boy was three months old and my oldest son was seven years old. I felt additional pressure because my son had been classified as being more severe on the autistic spectrum and the specialist advised immediate intervention to help him. Early winter 2001, I made two hasty decisions I will regret forever. I chose to ignore my motherly intuition and harmed my little boy as a result.

My son had all the easily recognizable signs of autism: he rocked, self-injured, spun objects, fixated on routines, was non-verbal, engaged in rapid eye blinking with visual scanning, had an absence of eye contact and displayed serious aversions to different smells, foods, and fabric textures. The most difficult though, was his unwillingness to sleep for more than four to six non-consecutive hours in a day. He also refused to go to sleep unless he was squished tightly against his dad or me. Unless one of us stayed next to him, he would wake up. This was a serious problem, because his dad needed to go to work and I needed to get up to breastfeed his brother throughout the night and care for his siblings during the daytime. Needless to say, I considered myself lucky to get four hours of interrupted sleep a day.

When I asked my son's doctor, an autistic specialist, for advice regarding how to help my son sleep, the first recommendation I received was to medicate him. I opposed this idea. My son would not ingest anything he did not want, or eat anything that wasn't during a scheduled mealtime. He would bite, kick, and scratch me when he needed medicine for illness. His anxiety would reach the point that he would scratch his face and hands until he bled and bang his head on the floor. I would have needed a straight jacket to immobilize him just so I could administer medicine to help him sleep. I was adamantly against using restraints. So, medicine was out.

After I opted against drug-induced sleep, the next suggestion my son's doctor offered was that I should place him in his crib and let him cry until he fell sleep. The doctor must have sensed my hesitation, because he hastened to assure me that after the first few difficult nights, he would adjust and sleep for longer periods of time. The doctor recommended trying it for at least two weeks because he felt it would be sufficient time for my son to adjust. I wasn't enthusiastic about the crib suggestion because I consider it a form of restraint. However, I was somewhat mollified by the fact that this method would be non-

invasive, unlike the medication route. I understood my son needed more sleep, so a few days after visiting the doctor I reluctantly decided to try it. The experiment to help him sleep was unsuccessful. Despite the doctor's recommendation of two weeks, I only did what he had suggested for four nights. My son literally screamed and cried for six hours straight all four nights. He was so disturbed; he began to refuse to eat during the day.

I abruptly ended the attempt to make him sleep alone and for longer periods of time in his crib. This experiment had resulted in causing him anxiety that lasted for months. The telephone ringing could prompt a screaming fit. He displayed more self-injury than I had witnessed before. Additionally, he was frantic at bedtime and increasingly clingy. Previously, my husband could lie next to him to get him to go to sleep. After those four hellish nights, he would only allow me to sleep next to him. This new development lasted for months.

I had betrayed his trust. I had not believed this forced change would be the best thing for him and I did it anyway. I still question how I was able to listen to him scream for four nights. How could I walk into the bedroom and try to calm him and then walk away? How could any person do this to a helpless little boy? I am still haunted by my decision to let him "cry it out".

As tormented as he became during the attempt to help him sleep more, it didn't compare to my next regrettable decision one month later. The doctor suggested I address his refusal to eat a variety of foods. When he was diagnosed, his diet consisted of pizza, spaghetti, waffles, pancakes, Pop-Tarts, grilled cheese and banana baby food. The only snack food he would eat was Cheetos. Water was the only liquid he would drink. In addition to being particular about how each food was prepared, it also needed to be cut a certain way: pizza was cut in four quarters, grilled cheese in half on the diagonal. Any variation and he would refuse to eat it. If anyone besides me prepared, or touched his food, he would not eat it.

The doctor suggested I withhold any foods he currently ate and offer him the same meal I prepared for the rest of the family. He predicted the first day he would refuse to eat, but after that, hunger and his innate survival instinct would kick in and he would begin to eat. He reassured me that a child would not starve in one or two days, so not to worry when he didn't eat.

Despite medical evidence supporting the doctor's claim that he wouldn't starve, I had my doubts about this approach. I believed his response to food went beyond a typical toddler's refusal to try new things. I also thought the doctor should know this, because a self-restricted diet is a classic behavior exhibited by autistic individuals. I was very scared at the possibility of needing to force him to take vitamins though, so I tried it.

He did not learn to eat new things. He didn't even care that he wasn't eating. There wasn't any indicator that he even felt hunger. He only screamed and cried when I would offer him alternative foods. After two days he had no physical stamina left and he would just lie in one place. Even after I offered him his favorite foods, he would not eat. On the third day, in the evening, I was on the verge of taking him to the hospital when he finally decided to eat.

What was I thinking? Didn't I learn my lesson with the first "experiment"? He suffered immediate physical problems including weight-loss, fatigue and constipation. Also, there were long-term, negative side effects from attempting to "starve him into submission". He ate a smaller quantity of food and had difficulty recognizing he liked the foods I offered him. He developed distrust for food he did not visually see me prepare for him. One of the worst consequences though, was he began rejecting two foods he previously liked: waffles and spaghetti.

Seven years later, I still experience feelings of guilt because of my decisions. I profoundly regret two things: I stood by and did nothing to help my little boy, and I chose to ignore my intuition and instigated the events that harmed him in the first place. After these experiences, I made a couple of decisions I could be proud of. First, I switched doctors. I found one that did not claim to be an autism expert, but was supportive of the way I chose to help my son. The most important thing I did was to make a commitment to never ignore my intuition in regards to my children. I can never completely escape the shadow of my guilt, but the shadow has grown dimmer in the subsequent years of successfully helping my son in ways that do not jeopardize his health or happiness.

October Corn Stalks

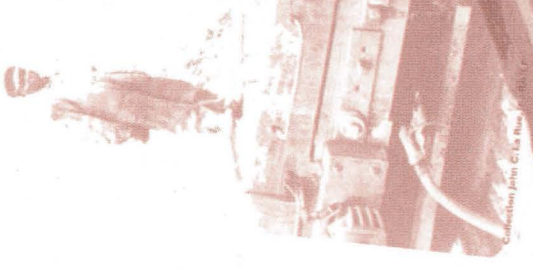
Lisa Brubaker

Blanche Rednan Poetry Award

All true poetry, wherever it is found -- whether in the works of the great masters or of beginners -- has one thing in common: it transcends the merely literary. One way a writer can practice achieving this transcendental condition is by close observation of things in nature, of objects themselves, stripped of the subjective conceptions we bring to them. It is in paying close attention to things themselves that a writer may achieve a contemplative awareness of the mysteries they embody and which cause them to exist in the first place, as well perhaps the greatest mystery of all, our own inexplicable ability to perceive them. "October Corn Stalks" admirably demonstrates this poetic endeavor with sensitive tactile and visual images that accompany and rise beyond the speaker's individual experience, and in its beautifully realized final two lines.

— Franz Wright

I became lost while playing in a field of corn stalks.
A feeling of panic began.
The Northern winds had brought my goosebumps arrival.
Looking upwards, I felt the heavy hint of rain.
The parched floss twisted wildly.
I heard the scratching of all the sandpaper leaves,
And the tattered stalks were blocking each row.
I broke into a run while the sandpaper leaves grazed my face.
I heard a noise off in the distance and moved my head's side towards the din.
The realization was a car's speeding approach.
A cloud of dust off the dirt road came along with it.
I made a promise to myself, never to forget the fear of the experience,
Only to notice for the first time the shiny golden and brown kernels.



On the Balance Beam

Brittany Mead

First Place Poem

"On the Balance Beam" is a marvelously clear and understated expression of our moving and disturbing human power to empathize, to so vividly care about another human being that at certain moments, for all intents and purposes we become that person. I admire the poem's simplicity and the genuine lyricism that results from it. In writing, simplicity is perhaps the most difficult thing to achieve.

— Franz Wright

My sister stands poised
on the four inch beam.
Sweat trickles softly
from my brow.

She raises her arms
above her head as
she readies herself
to spring back.

She throws herself back
in perfect angles.
Her hands slightly touch
the beam's frame.

Her body comes back.
Her feet tap the beam.
She smiles.

Homeless

Lisa Birbaker

Second Place Poem

"Homeless" is a poem of great humanity, and tends to suggest the enlightened perception that beneath shallow differences of personality, race, gender, age and so forth, we all experience the same basic thoughts and feelings.

But unlike the focused simplicity of "On the Balance Beam", it achieves this momentary unity with others in a manner more reminiscent of Whitman, that is, by cataloguing and expanding upon the seemingly endless ways in which the traits we all have in common manifest themselves. It's a touching poem characterized by a deep sense of relatedness to the world.

— Franz Wright

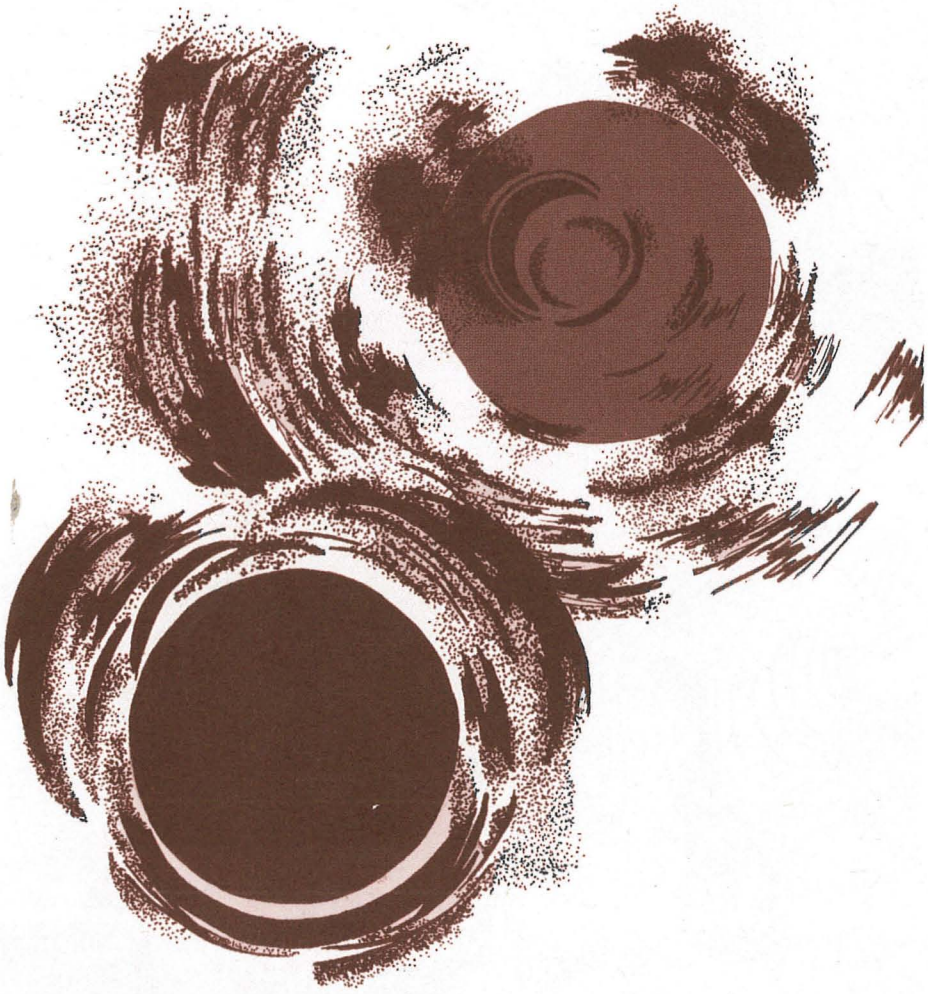
Do you recognize me?
I am your much-loved brother.
Your long distance cousin, aproned grandma, and righteous father.
I live amongst the bleary-eyed workers of the day, the volunteers that stab for garbage upon the gulf's shore.
I dream nightmares while your twin dances the Rumba.
Do you recognize me?
I am a flower, a rug, a sneeze, a button, a problem.
I pray for the winning team, but scream inside temples for the underdogs.
I cry in secret by not shedding a tear, cough to bring forth my existence.
I tell fabulous jokes and hope the hiccups come in silence.
Do you recognize me?
I am Yellowstone Park, a waterfall, a calf, a dragon, a toy.
I use my heart in order to see but feel empty emotions with my brain.
I am not immune to animosity, but deaf to repugnance.
Do you recognize me?
I am no one person but I am all, a searcher without a goal, a lost fear the country once held within its bosom.
I believe in the Lord, in Buddha, and in spirits but will trust no God.
Do you recognize me?
I am your screaming anger, pushed down frustration, overlooked worry, and fear.
I am the aluminum paper thrown away after a stick of gum.
I fulfill my days while I totally waste someone else's life.
Do you recognize me?
I am the indigo blue of the handicapped only lines.
I call out to the lost-and-found dog-eared pages located in libraries.
I use the forest green dumpsters as playgrounds just as the rich.
Do you recognize me?
I feel a human's touch is demonic, a cat's purr as bliss.
I am a piece of moldy, blackened, cracked cheese.
I sit on trunks of fallen trees while holding my breath.
Do you recognize me?
I am the sweet smell of microwave popcorn.
I can withhold everything you call your own.
I welcome my complete invisibility.
Do you recognize me?


FURNITURE! FURNITURE!
WHOLESALE AND RETAIL
YLOR'S
YORK,
RISTIE STREET

Blackout

ELIZABETH BLUME

Selection of Merit



Eriosion

Mr. Zachary Bodnik

Selection of Merit



A Painter's Tool

carie campbell-cormier

Selection of Merit



un-named

JUSTIN CARGO

Selection of Merit



Moto #1

eric connor

Selection of Merit



Moto #2

eric connor

Selection of Merit



Jaws

Danielle Frost

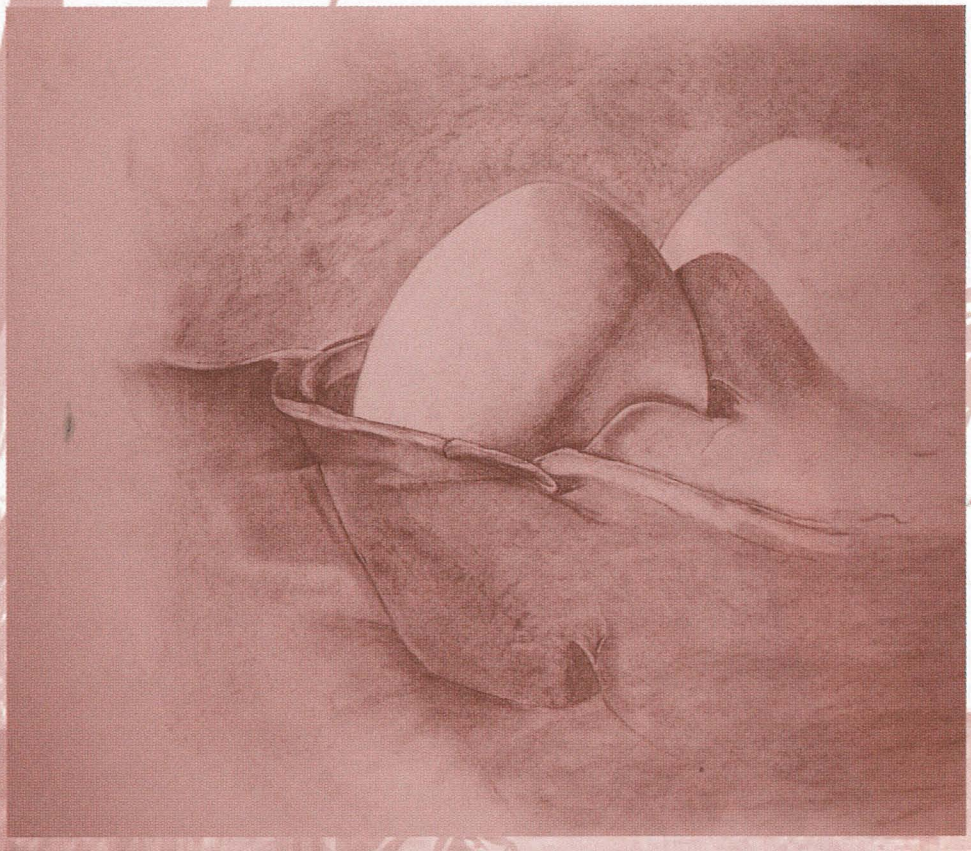
Selection of Merit



Egg

XING Hang

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The Pot

Xeng Hang

Selection of Merit



Forgive?

Sandra Jezierski

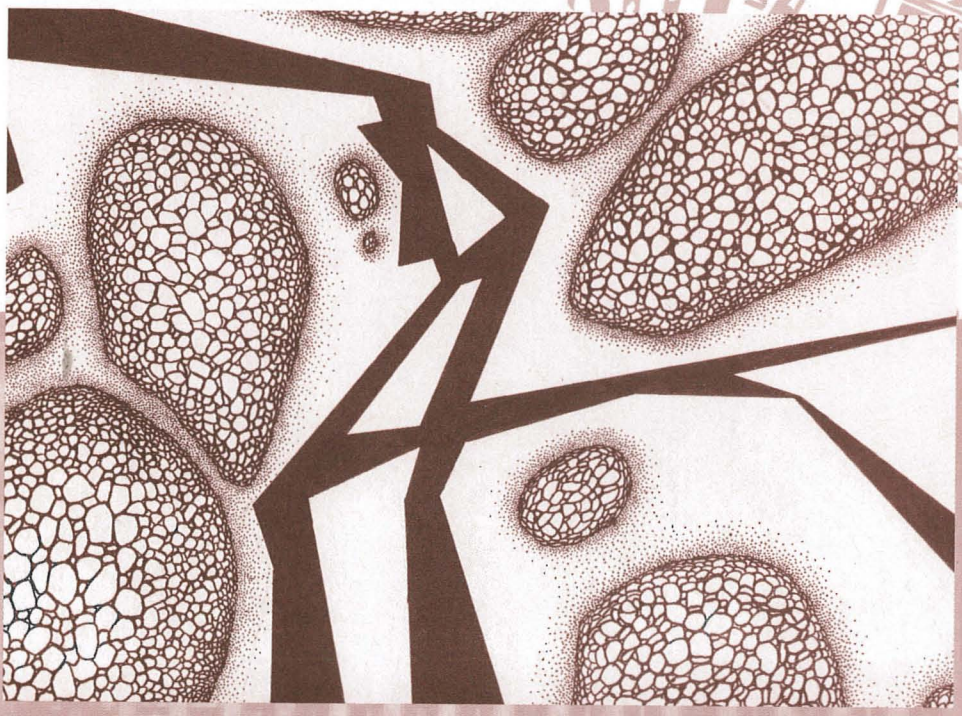
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It

MATTHEW JOHNSON

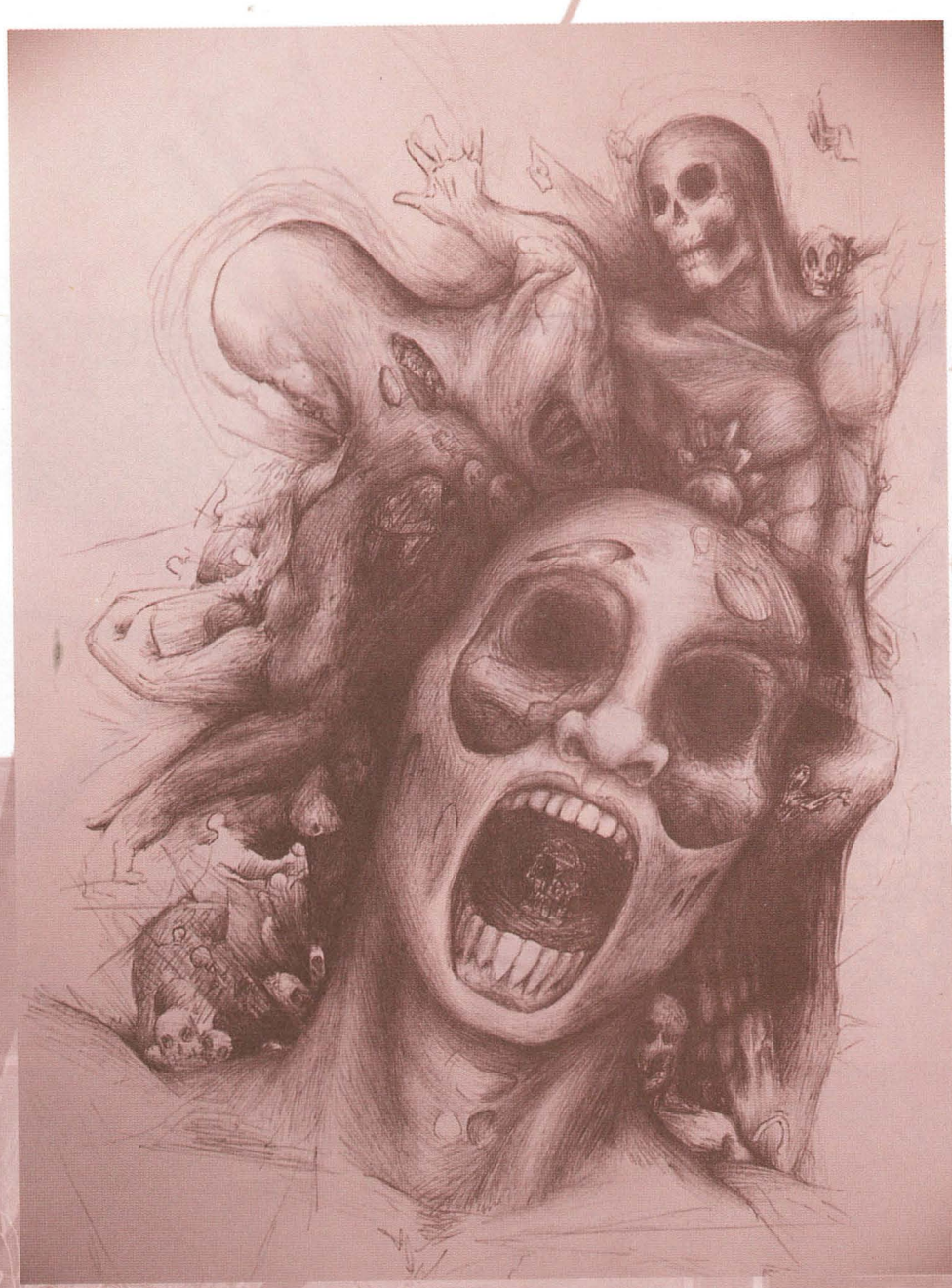
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Study of Structure

matthew jorde

Selection of Merit



Phaeton's Fall

ARNOLD C. KOONTZ

Selection of Merit





Fracture

Zach May

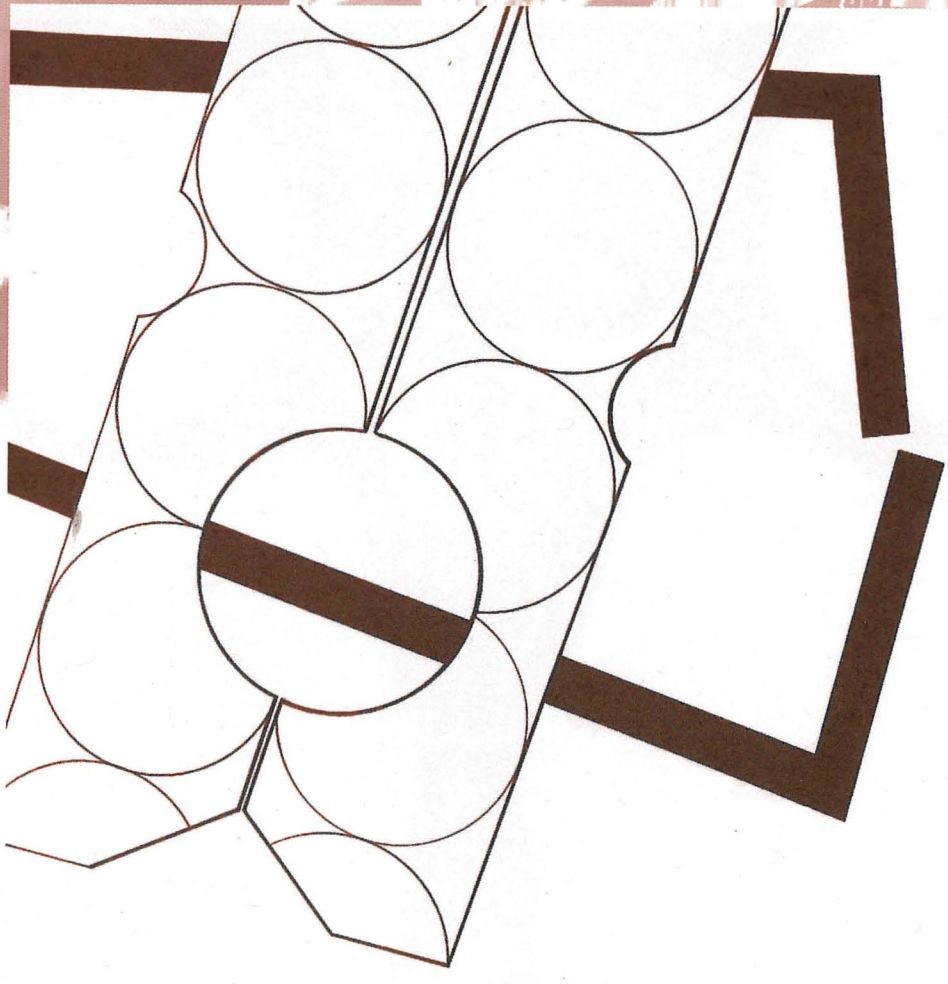
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Overlay

adrienne pennington

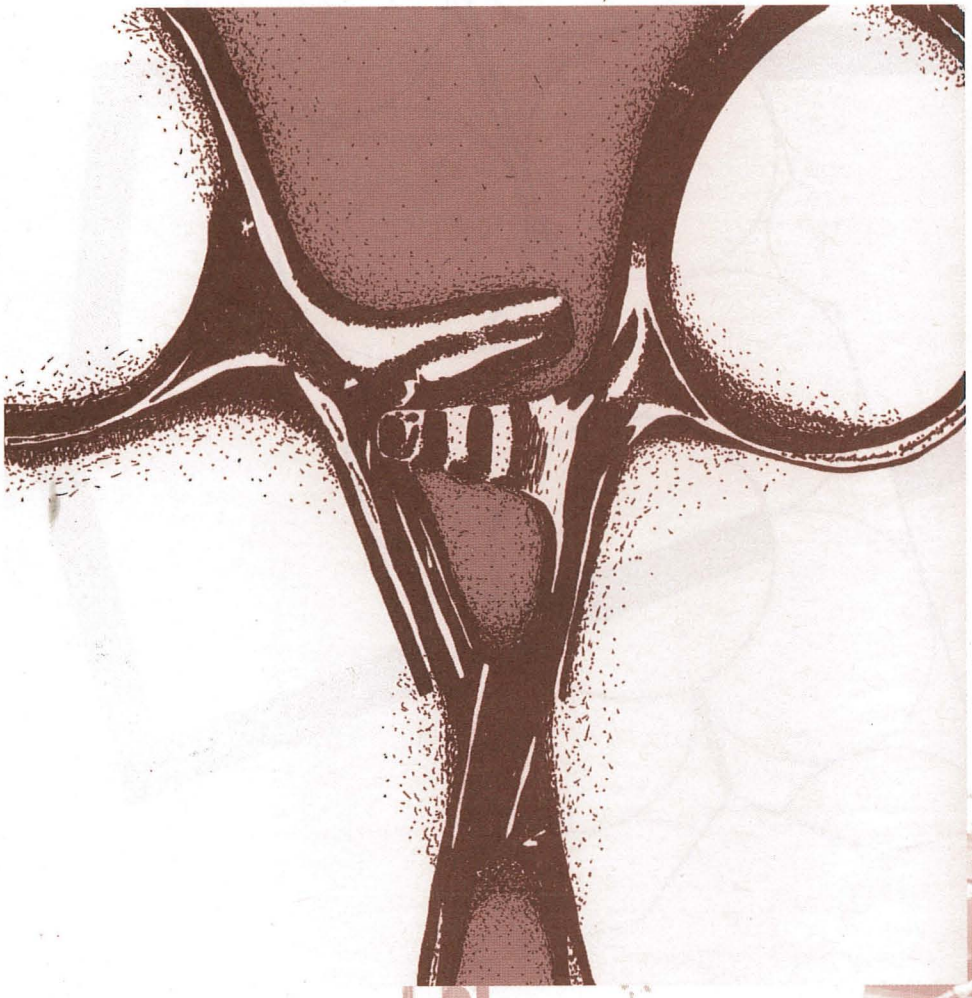
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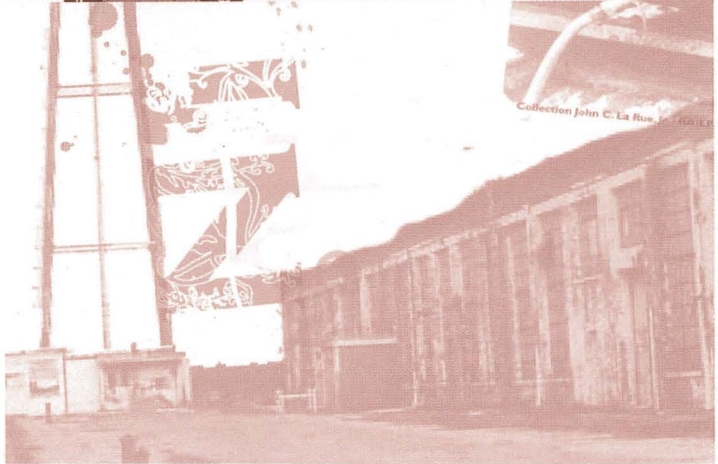


Surface Cut

natalia santi

Selection of Merit





Fungi

STACY SCHLANDTAFF

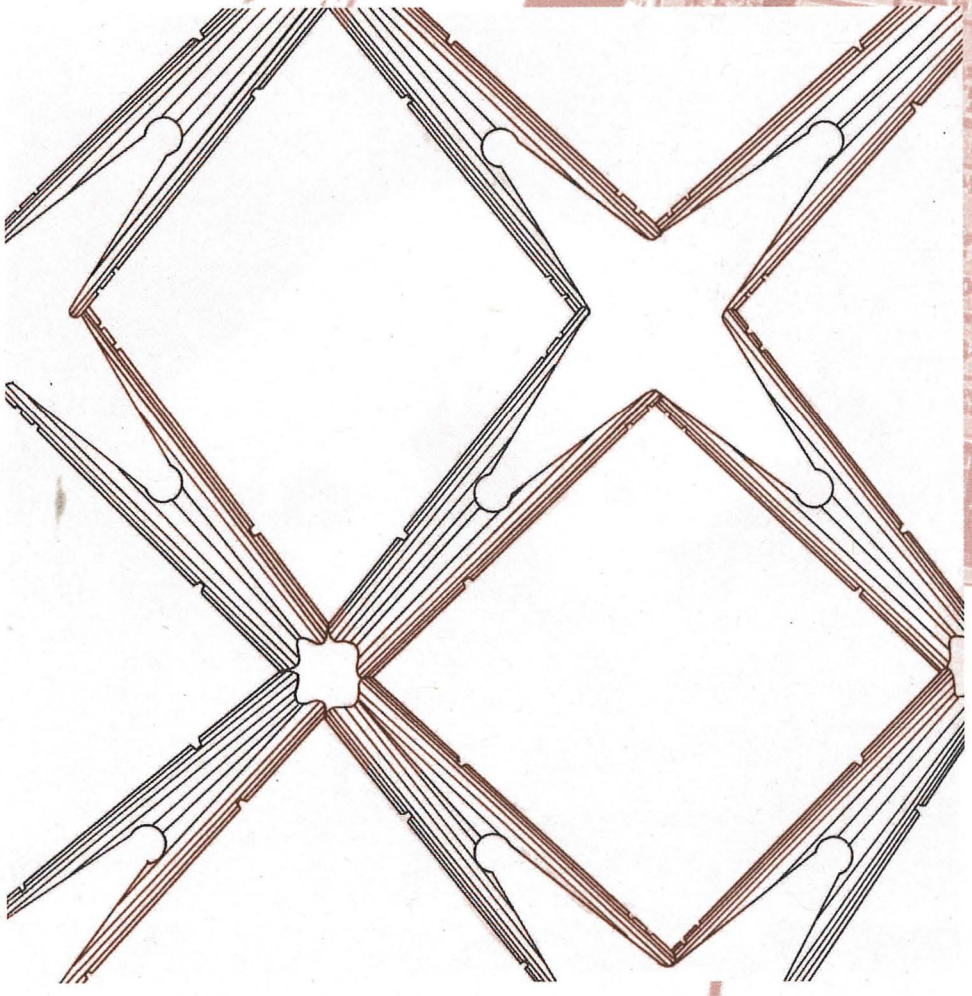
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Starburst

michael slabbinck

Selection of Merit

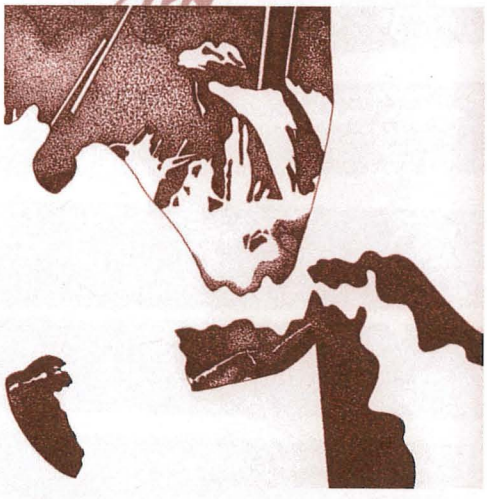


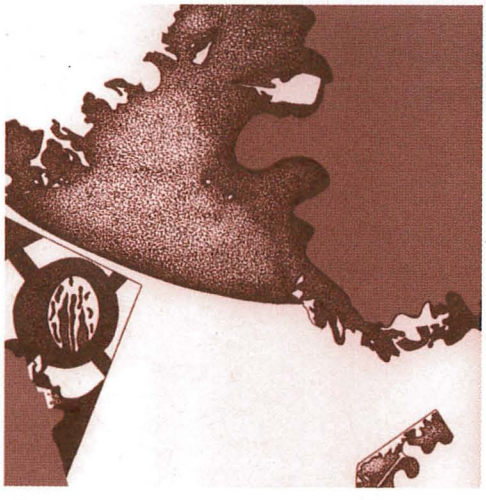
Smooth, Smoother, Smoothest

CODY SWARTS

Selection of Merit



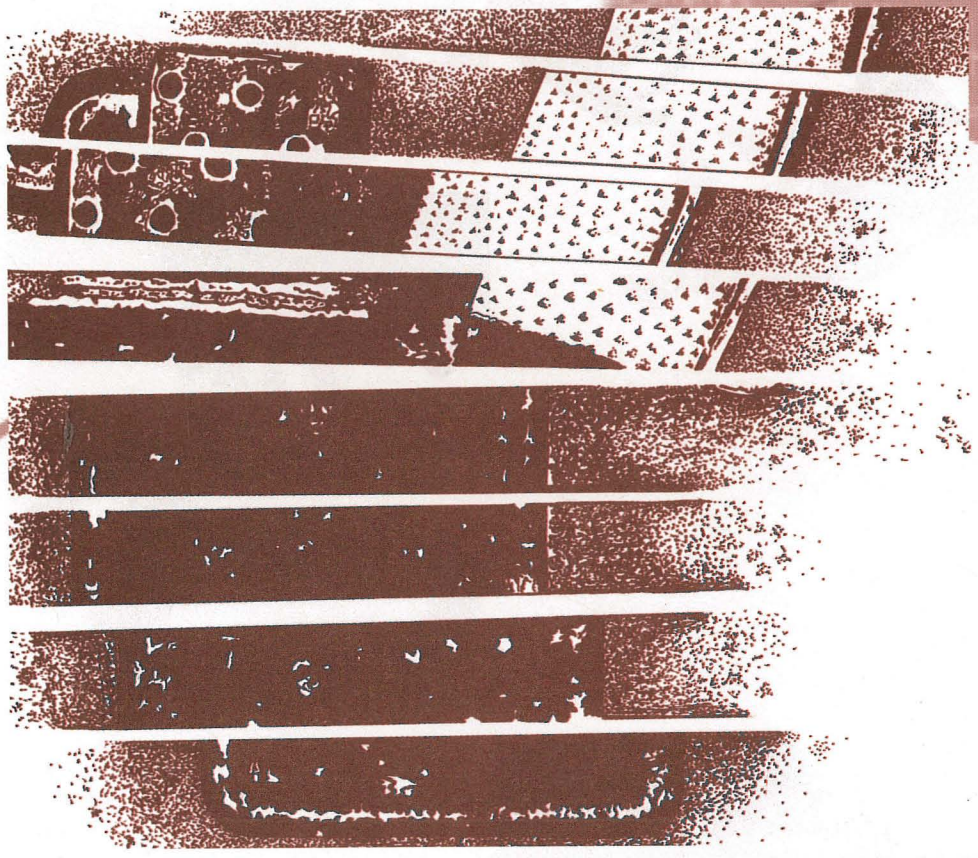




Lighter in Pieces

Sara Tomeo

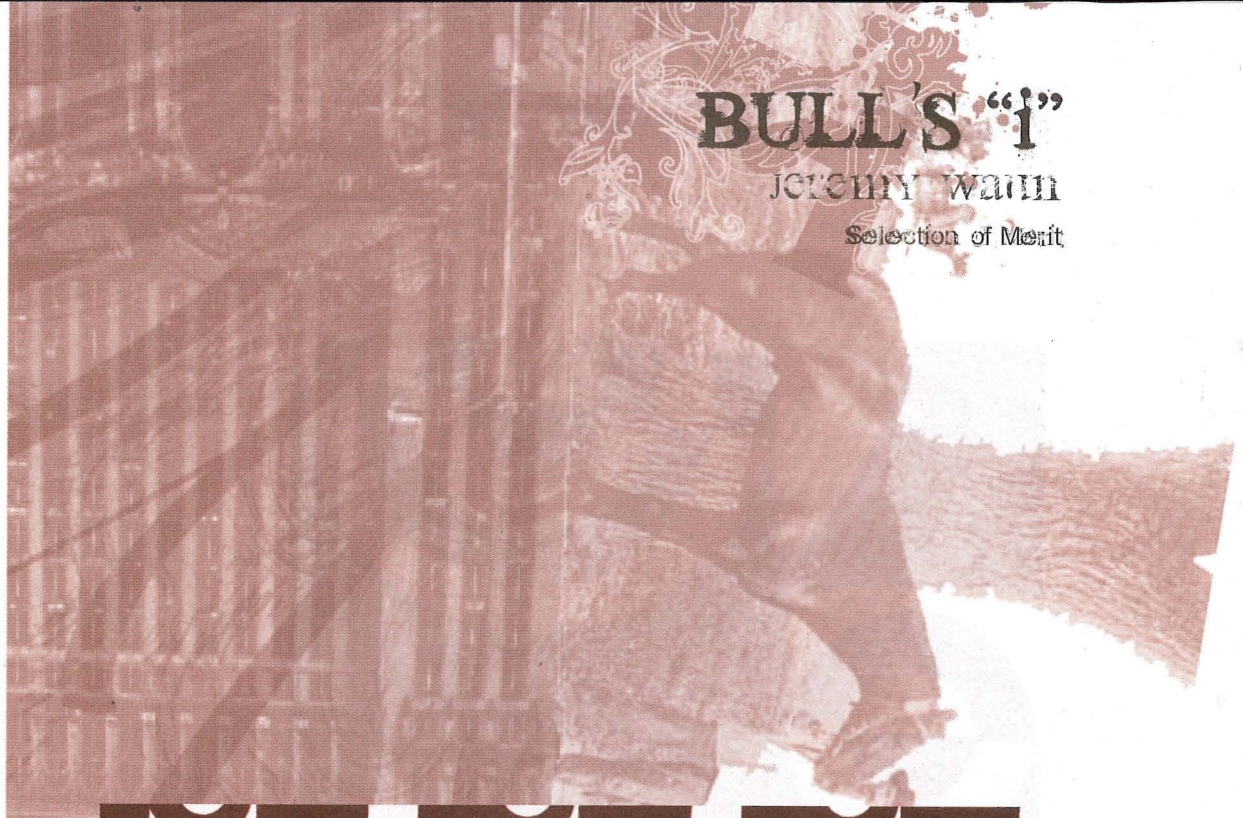
Selection of Merit



BULL'S "i"

Jeremy Wann

Selection of Merit





Target Practice "B"

Jeremy Wann

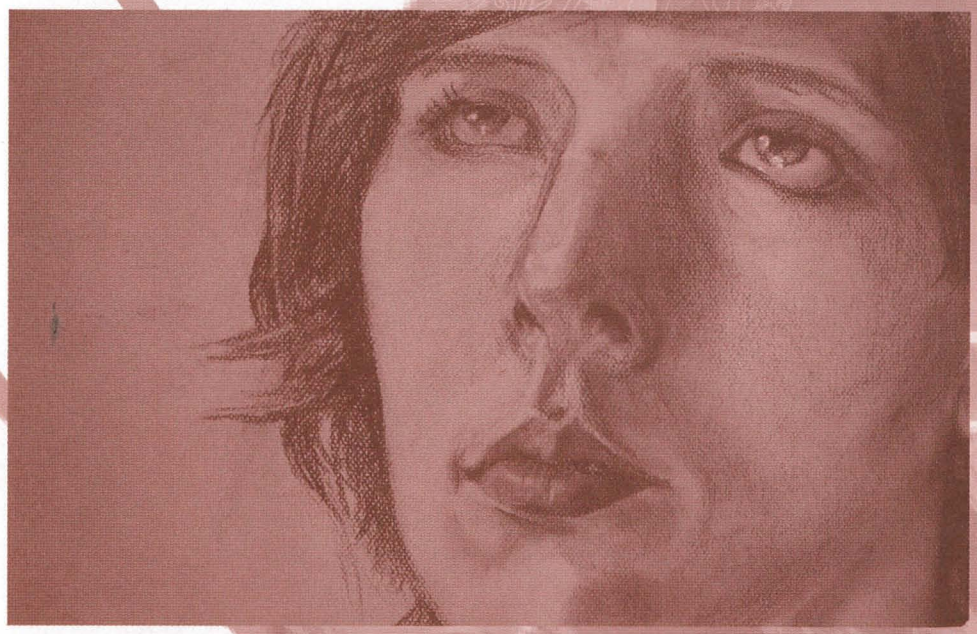
Selection of Merit



Alissa

MATTHEW WINKLER

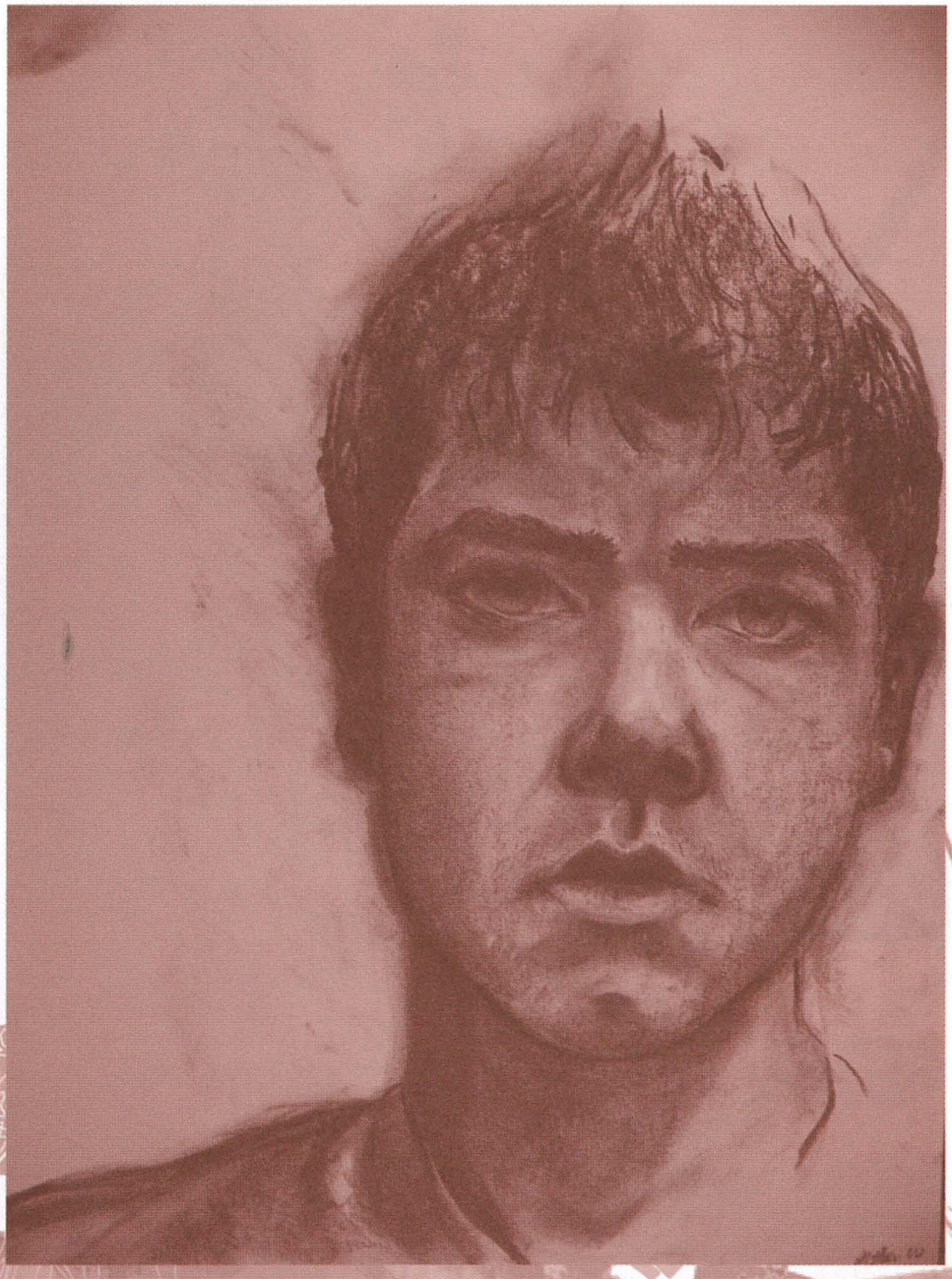
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Me, Myself, and Eye

matthew winkler

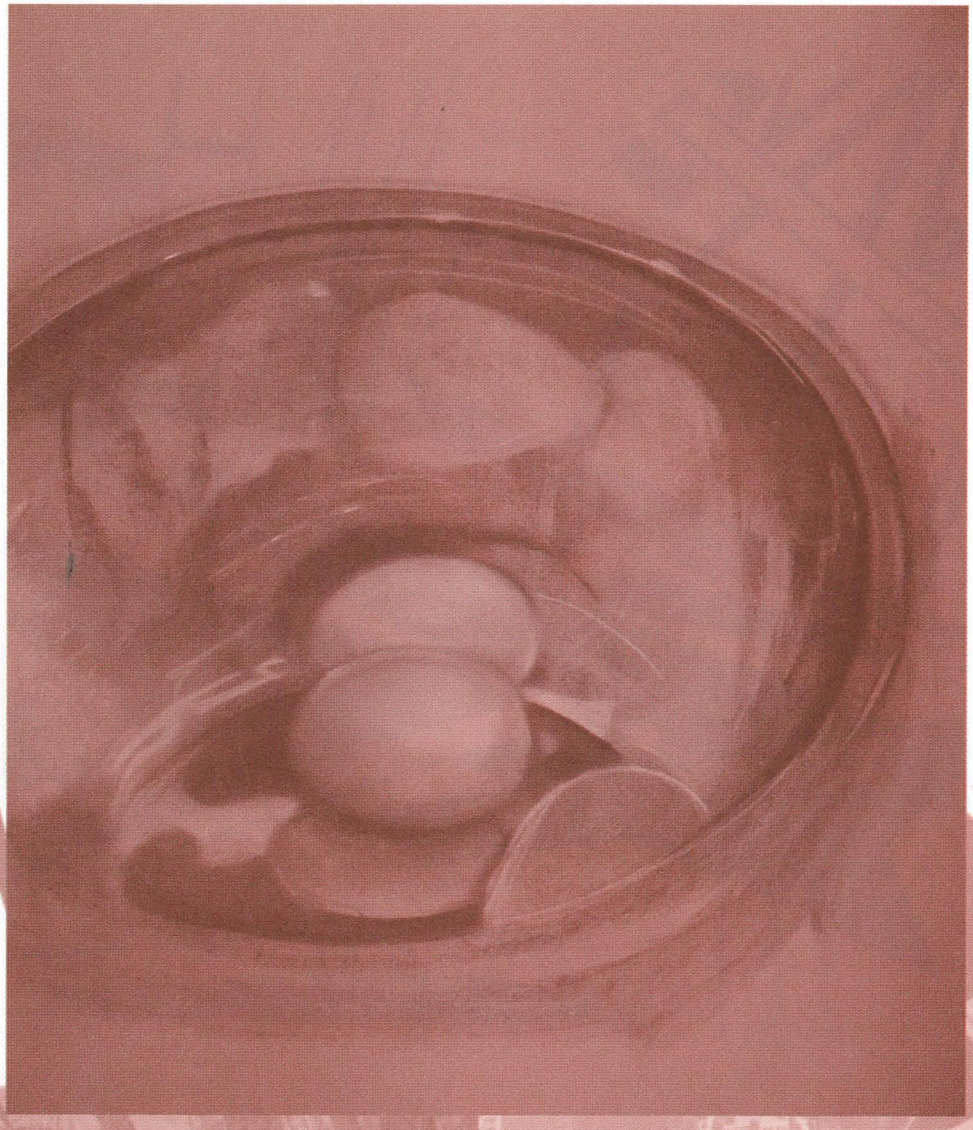
Selection of Merit



Two Left

matthew winkler

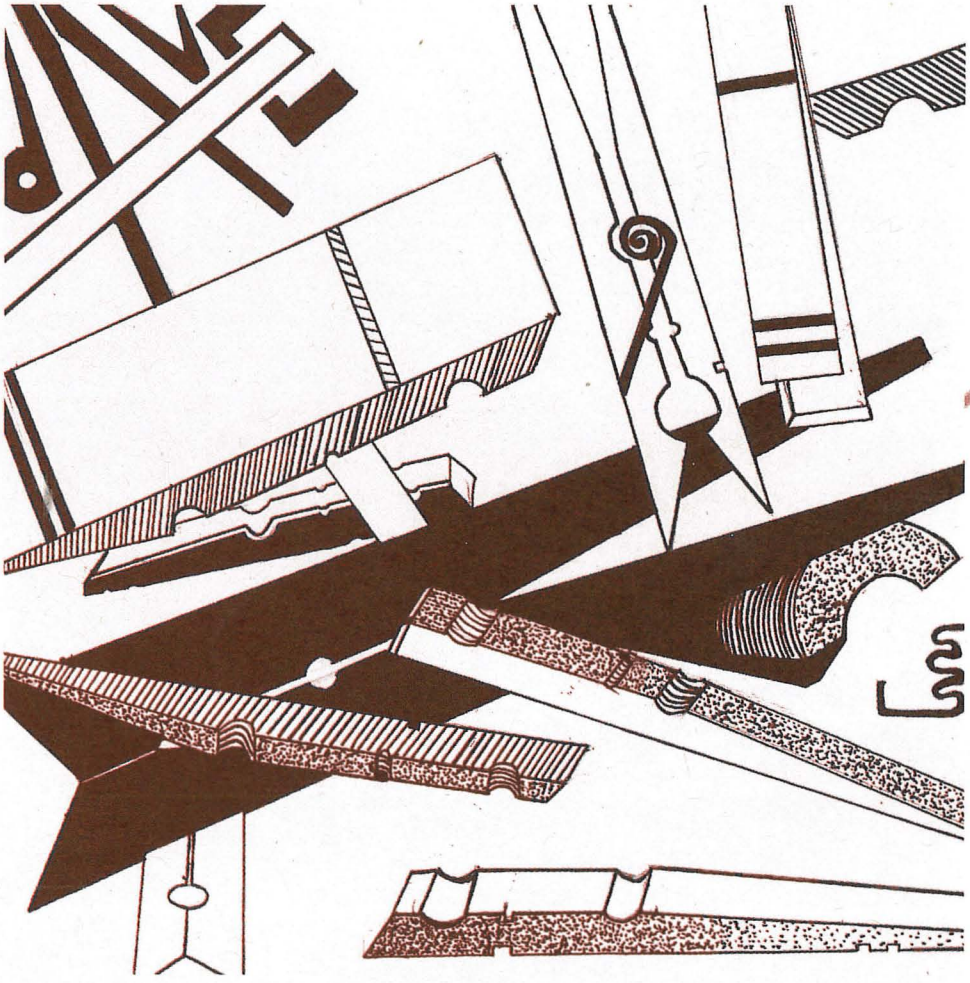
Selection of Merit



Inside the Clothespin

Dave Worden

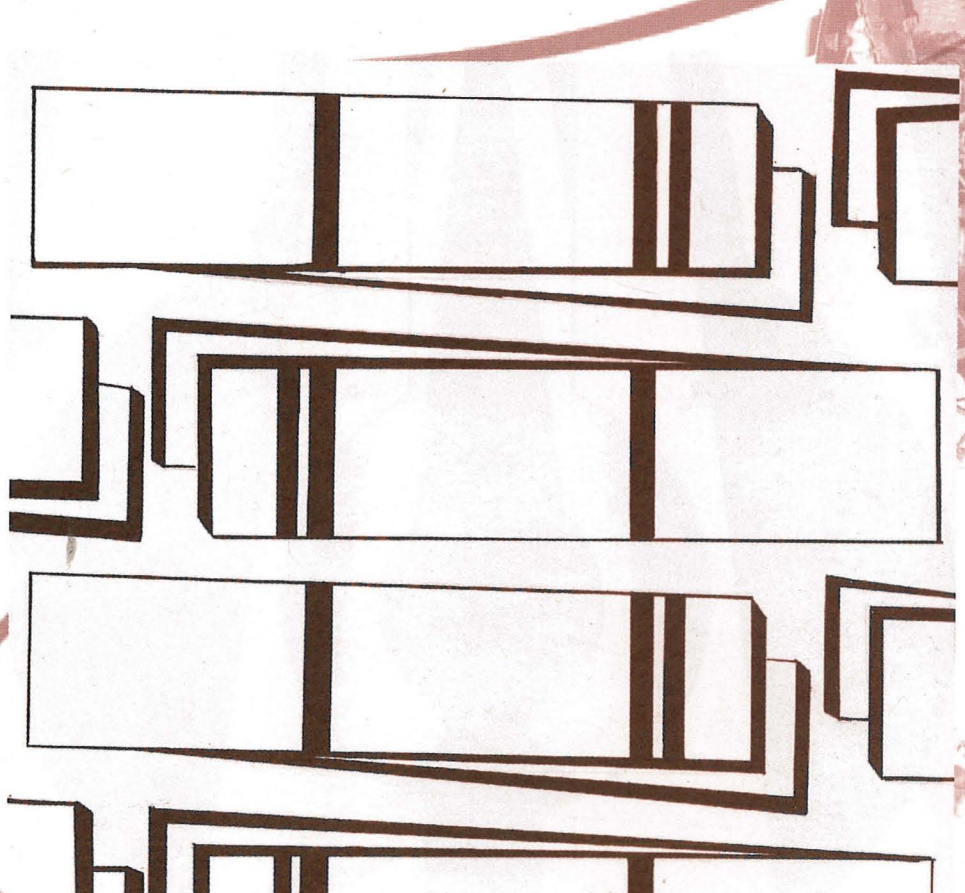
Selection of Merit



Paralyzed in Parallel

Dave Worden

Selection of Merit



The Dull Roar of Static Happiness

Dave Worden

Selection of Merit



The Photograph

amy cole

Selection of Merit

The children are screaming and hellfire is raining down upon the frantic city; birds cry as they fly away to a distant safe haven. The cracks in the streets shine red and the jet planes are playing mambo tunes with their gunfire quartets.

With his back to his tightly shuttered window he straightens his tie one last time. It is the final touch to his well planned ensemble: black shoes buffed to an obnoxious shine, pressed trousers held up by snappy suspenders that are hidden under a starched white button-down. It is completed by a double breasted jacket and a formal bow tie; he is the epitome of nineteenth century charm. Add a cane and he is the perfect touch to any Jane Austen setting.

Oblivious to the carnage that is being acted outside of his window, he checks his image in the mirror. He has come to accept what the years have done to his body. A man with thinning white hair combed over a smooth scalp and squinting brown eyes framed by oval glasses looks back at him. With a final look and a tug at his jacket he shuffles to the door without aid of his cane. He tenderly picks up a bouquet of posies and a worn photograph. It would have been fifty years.

Her face haunts his waking dreams, the face of her prime, in the youth he met her in. Back when his head was a shag of brown hair and his muscles were honed from hard work in the coal mines of Kentucky he earned his living in. Before a railcar accident took her from him and together they spent the nights rocking babies to sleep under open skies and let the eternity of their lives play out before them. She was a vision with long blond curls caught up in pins and deep green eyes that laughed at you no matter what her mouth was doing.

Clutching the photograph and giving it a long glance, he reaches for the handle of his bedroom door. Times had hit hard upon the city and he had to rent out a single room to live out the last of his days. A single room for his sleeping, his shitting and eating; like a jail cell for the most malicious of criminals. It was nothing like the house he once had where the children had room to play and scream and he had his own just to sit and smoke his pipe in. She would stand over a bubbling sink humming show tunes and yelling at the kids to watch the vase and to wipe their feet.

Those times were easy and he never thought about a life without her, a life living in cramped quarters listening to soldiers get their moneys' worth with the local hookers. He heard the woman's fake moans through the paper thin walls and the soldier's last cry as he fell on top of her; the bed creaking under the weight.

Fifty years they would've been together; it was three years since her death. That morning he realized it was time he moved on and into the arms of his waiting family. His mother and father had gone years ago; they never met their two grandbabies. His son was already looking down upon him; nothing more than another baby faced soldier lying face down in foreign mud. His daughter that used to cling to his knee and beg for stories was nothing more than a short story on a tattered postcard. Those stopped coming months ago. She was married with children of his own. Like his father he wouldn't kiss his grandchild on the brow or tell it stories from his own youth. He was old and he was sore,

life wasn't worth living in this new, fierce world.

His back pocket betrayed his intentions: the outline of a small pistol with one bullet gracing its chamber. This was it. He opened his door to an empty hallway that stank of urine and old fish. No windows gave the hall light, only dim lights lit the eerie space illuminating numbered doors and stained carpet. He walked down the stairs as he had done times before but never for this reason. Reaching the door to the outside, he pauses as a millions thoughts go in and out of his head. Thinking of his destination cleared his head. The cemetery he chose for her was nearby. He wanted to take her home; back to America for the burial but he couldn't afford the trip.

Stepping outside he is hit with the news of the violence. Cars shriek by and motionless heaps litter the street. Mothers run by crying for their lost children. Step by step he reaches the edge of the street. Gun fire dances around him finally hitting a sobbing mother to his left; the search for her son over. Pushed down by traffic of invading soldiers his face hits stained cobblestones. His gun skids from his pants and is picked up by an eager soldier. Posies fall to his left, dropping petals on the still mother: an adornment for her premature grave

As he clutches the photograph tight and stares into the smiling eyes of his late love, he thinks of Saturday nights sneaking out and dancing until dawn. He remembers the booze burning their throats, fumbling under clothes and whispered promises of a lifetime of kisses. Their wedding day and faces of their children flash before his closed eyes.

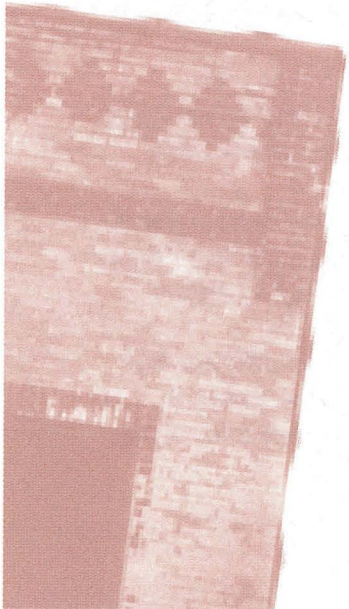
The soldiers trembling hands help him make his first move of the night. The gun shot joins the chorus of the night. Instantly he is sent back to his Ophelia, back to the warmth of blonde curls and the invitation of familiar curves. He leaves behind his single room and lonely, tainted nights. He leaves the wars of the naive and ignorant to be fought by children of his generation. He got his wish from a soldier with his gun, from a war without reason.

No More Farewells

BETH COLLISON

Selection of Merit

No More Farewells
Time to erase the frowns
Dry up the waterfalls of tears
It has stopped raining come and see
The heart has been mended
The black veil is raised
Winter has melted away
Awaken from your slumber
No more silence
Walk out from your grave



Just Becasue I didn't See it Happen

Katherine Dewitt

Selection of Merit

In our civilized society, there cannot be a transgression more heinous than that which is committed against a child. When such a crime has been exposed, the moral responsibility should be to report it immediately. An e-mail to a school counselor or an anonymous telephone call to the police department should be more than sufficient. But what if the transgression was only a suspicion without real evidence to back it up? Should it still be reported? Or should it be avoided for fear of falsely accusing the innocent? Sadly, I was forced to face these and other questions following an incident which ended in a family tragedy.

Samantha had been friends with my 14-year-old daughter since grade school. These two girls, along with another girl, Brandy, would always flock together for trips to the mall or impromptu slumber parties. In my eyes, it seemed to be an unusual grouping since both my daughter and Brandy were outgoing while Samantha was the exact opposite. It went beyond shy and withdrawn. If I were to select a word for it now, I would say she was "hiding" from something deep within her somber, brown eyes.

Samantha's stay-at-home mom, Heather, was an active volunteer at the local elementary school where her son attended. She was a friendly spirit who never minded taking the girls to the mall, driving my daughter home after school, or hosting stellar pool parties. Her husband, Mark, was a smiling personality who would always take time out from his latest home improvement project to chat with people. When my son was hospitalized for gallbladder surgery, they opened up their home to my daughter, saying it was no trouble at all. I never once questioned her safety while she was in their care.

Occasionally, my daughter would make comments about Samantha hating her dad to the point of wishing him dead. I rationalized this by thinking Mark may have been overly strict with his children, at least in their eyes. I honestly liked Samantha's parents.

One winter evening, as I was driving home from picking up my kids after a night class at the college, my daughter revealed some disturbing news that literally caused my head to swoon.

"Guess what?" she said out of the blue as we jostled along the muddy gravel road that my parents lived on. "Brandy took Samantha to the school counselor today because her dad was hurting her, so they called the cops on him and he shot himself."

I am sure my eyes grew twice their size as I swung away from the treacherous cow path to study her under the green glow of the dashboard lights. Disbelief was my first reaction followed by a parental probing of details. I was positive I had misunderstood something in her announcement

"I'll tell you why later," was all she said as she inclined her head towards the back of the van where her 12-year-old brother had his nose stuck in a Game Boy. As soon as she uttered those words, I was overwhelmed with an instant sick feeling of "knowing."

Later that night, when we had more privacy, she told me how Mark had been sexually abusing his own daughter over a long period of time. Earlier in the week, Samantha had confided to Brandy about the growing frequency of the

abuse saying it was now occurring on a nightly basis. Brandy insisted they go see the school counselor at once. I silently congratulated Brandy for being so courageous.

The next day I phoned Carol, Brandy's mother, to commend her on her daughter's brave actions. This was when Carol shocked me with a further revelation — both she and her daughter had known about the abuse for weeks! Her reason for staying silent up until this point was the fear of Samantha being angry with Brandy for telling her "secret".

Anger seethed into the core of my motherly instincts. How dare they let that poor girl suffer needlessly by not reporting this to the proper authorities! Then I stopped my mind in mid-rant. Hadn't I known about the abuse on some level as well? All of the things my daughter told me about Samantha's behavior and the hatred towards her father came to mind along with her empty eyes and unsmiling face. What had I done to help her? I tried to rationalize it had only been a suspicion, and yet, when my daughter informed me of the tragedy, I hadn't been surprised at all.

Mark died the next day from the gunshot wound to his head without ever regaining consciousness. Heather was now a widow forced to fend for not only herself and her two children, but also to grapple with the shock, outrage, and disbelief over her husband's actions towards their own child. Meanwhile, Samantha was facing a long road to healing while inside she still must come to grips with with the feelings of responsibility over the death of her father, and the anger of her younger brother towards her.

It would be so much easier to report child abuse if it was witnessed first hand or if some sort of welt was left behind to speak of the story. But in my experience, where there was a lack of proof needed to make a valid report, what should have been done? Should Carol have mentioned what she knew to Heather? Should I have asked Samantha if things were going okay at home? Should both Carol and I have sought out a third party for assistance rather than letting the children take it upon themselves to seek help?

At first, I had condemned Carol for her lack of response over what she knew, but now I am condemning myself for what I thought I knew. In both cases, the blatant fact remains if either one of the so-called "responsible" adults had taken time to pursue the situation further, the outcome may have been exceedingly different.

Where's a Gymnasium?

CHERYL FLORKA

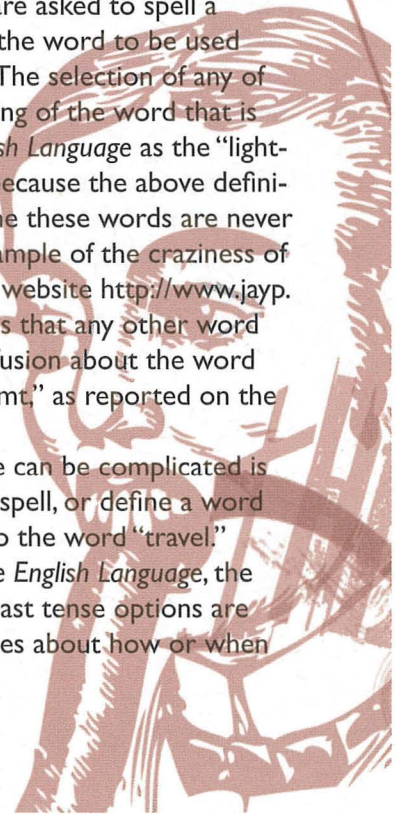
Selection of Merit

As parents try to assist their children with reading and spelling, it clearly becomes evident how illogical, even crazy, as Richard Lederer says, the English language is. Most children are naturally inquisitive and can be relentless, so for parents and children alike, learning to read can require a lot of patience and resources. There are rules and exceptions and sometimes no explanations. And with obstacles like silent letters and acronyms to hurdle, assisting children with reading and spelling can even challenge a parent's knowledge. As a matter of fact, as you read this essay I am quite certain that you will learn one or two things that you did not already know about the English language.

Parents are elated when their young children are beginning to read short sentences and they want to spend more time reading. This becomes a challenge, however, because the only skill these children can rely on is sounding out the letters. It can become very frustrating for them. For example, how are young children able to know that the "c" in "carrot" makes the "k" sound, while the "c" in "cereal" makes the "s" sound? Is there a way to explain why "cat" begins with "c," while "kitten" begins with "k?" It is also very difficult to explain to young children that even though the words "phone" and "fox" begin with the "f" sound, they do not both begin with the letter "f." Take into consideration words like "said" and "paid" that look the same but sound totally different, and the reading process can seem completely overwhelming. As noted on the internet website http://www.dy-tech.info/language/language.htm, there are many words that are spelled the same but are pronounced entirely differently, like "cough" and "through" (the combination "ough" can actually be pronounced 9 different ways), so it is no wonder that some children will have a "rough" time advancing their reading level.

Trying to help children study for a spelling bee can produce even more confusion. For instance, in a spelling bee when children are asked to spell a word they can ask for the word to be repeated, ask for the word to be used in a sentence, and/or ask for the definition of the word. The selection of any of the above options would prove to be futile for the spelling of the word that is described in *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* as the "lightness between the extremes of black and white." That's because the above definition is the same for the words "gray" and "grey." I imagine these words are never asked during a spelling bee, but they are a very good example of the craziness of the English language. Likewise, according to the internet website http://www.jayp.net/trivia/lang01.htm the word "set" has more definitions that any other word in the English language. At least there won't be any confusion about the word "dreamt," since it is the only English word that ends in "mt," as reported on the website http://www.dy-tech.info/language/language.htm.

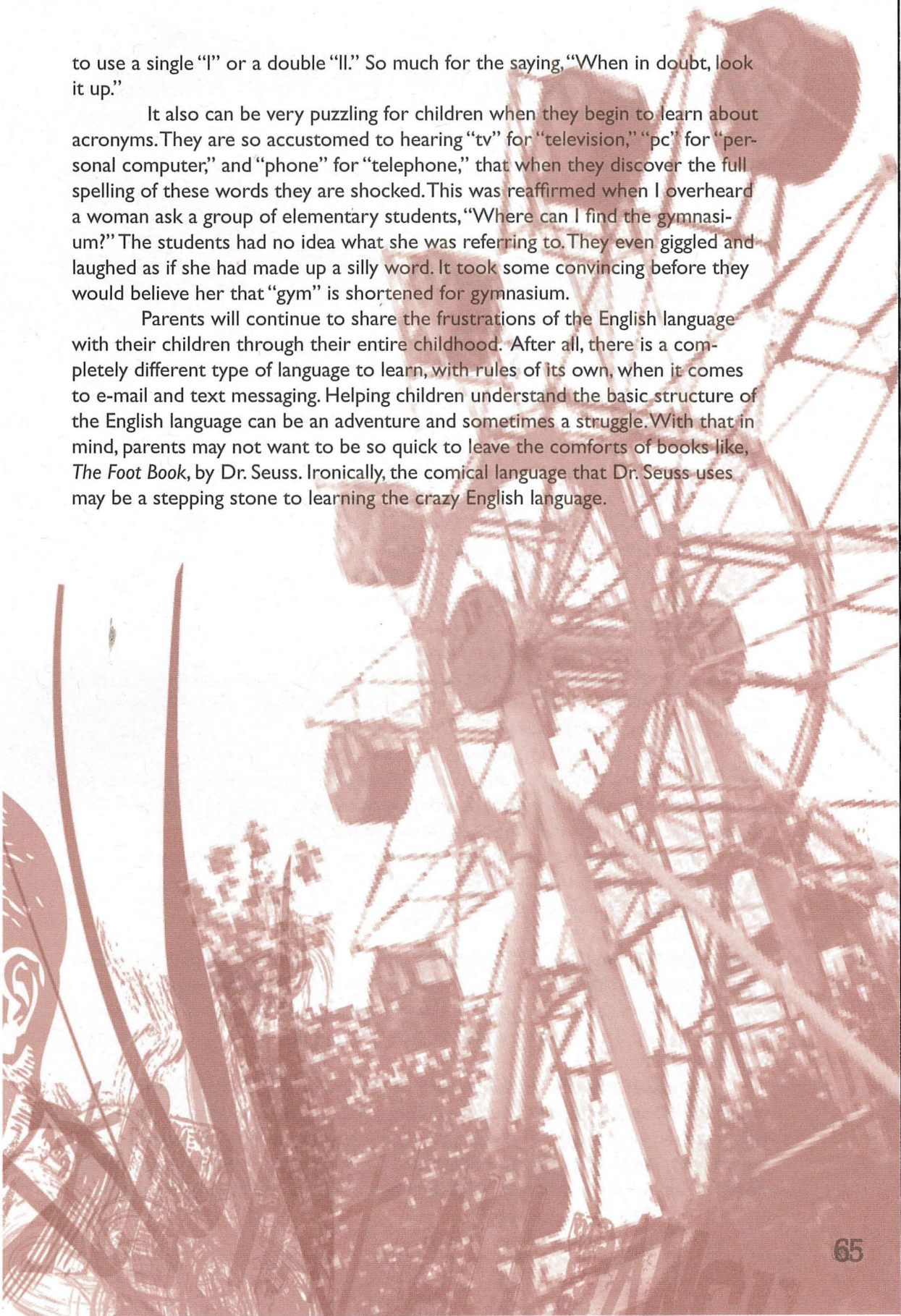
Another reason why preparing for a spelling bee can be complicated is that even the resources children will use to pronounce, spell, or define a word can be ambiguous. This is clearly obvious as it pertains to the word "travel." Again, referring to *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, the definition for the word "travel" indicates that the verb past tense options are "-eled," "elled," "-eling," or "elling." There are no guidelines about how or when



to use a single "l" or a double "ll." So much for the saying, "When in doubt, look it up."

It also can be very puzzling for children when they begin to learn about acronyms. They are so accustomed to hearing "tv" for "television," "pc" for "personal computer," and "phone" for "telephone," that when they discover the full spelling of these words they are shocked. This was reaffirmed when I overheard a woman ask a group of elementary students, "Where can I find the gymnasium?" The students had no idea what she was referring to. They even giggled and laughed as if she had made up a silly word. It took some convincing before they would believe her that "gym" is shortened for gymnasium.

Parents will continue to share the frustrations of the English language with their children through their entire childhood. After all, there is a completely different type of language to learn, with rules of its own, when it comes to e-mail and text messaging. Helping children understand the basic structure of the English language can be an adventure and sometimes a struggle. With that in mind, parents may not want to be so quick to leave the comforts of books like, *The Foot Book*, by Dr. Seuss. Ironically, the comical language that Dr. Seuss uses may be a stepping stone to learning the crazy English language.



Fractals and Shakespeare

Brian Fuchs

Selection of Merit

This essay shall address a question that literati sometimes ask about William Shakespeare's play, Henry IV, Part 1. The question, in a nutshell, is about the play's use of "interior" and "exterior"; the story being told on a very human scale and yet telling the epic tale of a great historical event. Scholars like to ponder how this was accomplished, and more importantly, why it was accomplished. This seems to me to be one of the truly big questions about Shakespeare. When given an opportunity to write an essay about Shakespeare's work, and how I would try to teach some aspect of his writing to a classroom of my peers, I knew it had to be on this question. There is much to explore and, while pondering the implications, I happened upon a thought that had never occurred to me before. It is that thought which motivated this paper.

This essay is not written in the usual form. The assignment was entitled "Teaching Shakespeare," and that is just what I attempted to do. I have had many teachers with many different styles since coming to college. Some start class with a tale of events current or historical, in the interest of "global awareness." Enclosed is a description of how I would attempt to teach a classroom full of students about the ideas I have uncovered in my reflections on this question. It is written almost in the form of a play, or an extended monologue with directions. My ramblings at the opening may seem off-topic, but by the end they will prove to be an illustration of the main point.

My claim is that Shakespeare used interior and exterior in a very specific way, to convey a very important truth. And I would explain it to my students in the following manner....

[Notebook in hand]: Today's lesson plan is to examine the play, Henry IV, Part 1, (brief pause) and, through this play, we will attempt to gain insight into the mind of William Shakespeare, generally considered to be one of the greatest minds in history... (Long Pause)

[Drop notebook on podium]... but, enough about him! I'd like to take a few moments and talk to you about a couple of other great thinkers, both mathematicians, who changed the way we look at our world. The first is Pythagoras, and the other is the modern mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot.

Pythagoras, who lived around 500 B.C., believed that all of nature could be described by mathematics. [Begin writing Fibonacci sequence on the chalkboard] Does anybody recognize this string of numbers?

"0...1...1...2...3...5...8...13...21...34..."

That's right, it is the Fibonacci sequence. It demonstrates a mathematical concept called a "algorithm.": a series of numbers arrived at by performing the same manipulation over and over again. In this particular algorithm, the manipulation is simply to add the last two numbers in the string, and write down that sum as the next number.

This same number sequence can be graphically represented by drawing a standard, four-quadrant grid, and naming the four quadrants anticlockwise like this [number quadrants]. If I go counterclockwise around the grid drawing a square with dimensions corresponding to the numbers in the sequence, starting at the center of my grid I draw a one millimeter square out into quadrant one,

then another to the right of the first, then a two millimeter square above the second, and a three millimeter square on the left of that, going down I make a five millimeter square, and to the right again for the eight millimeter square.

You probably can't see those yet, but you will begin to see them, soon. Now this brings me back to a step upwards, and the next number in our sequence is thirteen. [Continue to 34mm; pause in drawing]

Now can you begin to see these squares? Good. What happens if I draw a curve that passes diagonally through each of these, what kind of shape do I get? Yes, a spiral [draw spiral through existing squares]. So, help me out with the numbers, what should come next? [With student's help, draw progressive squares until that half of the board is full; extend the spiral throughout]

Mind you, this is no ordinary spiral. This particular spiral is known as the "Fibonacci Spiral," or "Golden Spiral." Now, at this point I should mention that the Fibonacci Spiral and the Golden Spiral are not exactly the same thing, but for our purposes we can call them equivalent; they are almost exactly the same shape. And Pythagoras was absolutely obsessed with this shape. This same spiral can be found throughout nature. It is in the shape of a ram's horn, or a nautilus shell, or a snail's shell. It is seen in the paths of decaying quantum particles, in the little whirlpools in your coffee after you stir it, and in spiral galaxies. Again I will say that these natural spirals are not exact matches, but they are so close to it that most mathematicians agree that the resemblance cannot be mere coincidence. This shape appears in many places and on many different scales, and it always looks the same.

Even when you look at it here on the board, you can see that we could draw a small section of the center on your notepad [outline a small section of the center, about the size of a notepad] and hold it up in front of your nose, or a slightly bigger segment in your notebook [outline a larger section around the notepad section] and hold it at arm's length, or the whole chalkboard, and look at it from where you sit, or we could lay this board down flat and draw so big a spiral as to cover all of North America, and look at it from space. It will all look the same. That is what's known as a "Fractal pattern," and it is not the only one.

Here is another; look at this shape [other half of chalkboard; equilateral triangle]. This is an equilateral triangle. Take note of its proportions, all three sides are the same length. Now, by drawing three more triangles, each identical to the first, I can create another triangle identical in appearance, but larger in scale.

This sort of fractal pattern has been explored by the other man I wanted to discuss, Benoit Mandelbrot. His work can be seen as a continuation of Pythagoras'. He further showed that nature can be described and understood through mathematics, by exploring the field of mathematics known as fractal geometry. Fractal geometry, more than any other form of mathematics, accurately describes the shape of systems and objects found in nature.

To use the classic example, if you look at a mountain range from a plane at high altitude, you can see that it has a rough, jagged kind of appearance. Get closer and look at a single mountain in that chain, and it too will have that same

rough, jagged-looking outline. If you stand on the side of that mountain and pick up one of the billions of small rocks of which it is made, you will see that it has that same "mountainy" appearance. It is Mandelbrot's claim that these resemblances are not coincidence. They are a direct result of the fact that the mountain is made up of individual rocks, and the range is made of individual mountains. Certain qualities and features of the components are bound to show up in the whole. These ideas, and these men, changed the way we look at our world. I just thought they should get some recognition for that.

[Set down chalk, return to notebook on podium] Okay, now that I've gotten that out of my system, Shakespeare's Henry IV, Part 1. I would like to talk about the sort-of "dual personality" of this play, and by that I mean the fact that it takes on two very different types of storyline. On the one hand, it is the story of a great battle that determined the line of succession for the throne of England, which will have a profound effect on the future of that nation. Of course, since England was soon to become a superpower, and remains one to this day, this same battle dramatically affects the course of history for the whole world. On the other hand, Shakespeare tells this story by following the personal life of a spoiled, wealthy young brat and his hooligan friends. How does Shakespeare accomplish this, and what (if anything) is he trying to say?

Well, for that, we must look to the overall structure of the play itself. The first thing that one might notice about the general formatting of this play is that it is told concurrently, not consecutively. That is, we see a little bit of Hal's life (what we call "interior"), then a little bit about the developing national crisis (or "exterior"), and so back and forth throughout the play. But how does this back and forth relationship enlighten the reader?

Starting in Act I, we are introduced to the troubles that currently plague Britain on the national and international level. We see that England is a divided country, with no clear sense of herself. The king is lamenting a civil war just passed when he receives word that another is brewing. This news not only dashes his hopes for peace within England, but also prevents his intent to travel to the Holy Lands to fight. England's internal strife is keeping her from carrying out those things which the king wishes to accomplish globally.

The very next scene is so great a change in environment as to shock the audience into attention. Here, we enter a very "interior" look at the life of Prince Henry. It is not a scene befitting of his noble heritage. We find the man discussing last night's debauchery, then moving on to plan tonight's crime. This decidedly unprincely fellow is given to thieving, drinking and general depravity. Yet as his close friend Falstaff speaks for only the second time in the play, he brings up Henry's inevitable destiny: "...I prithee sweet wag, when thou art a king...." Although Henry seems to be in no hurry to behave like a prince and Heir Apparent, he cannot escape the fact that he is just that. Much like England herself, Prince Henry is in a state of internal conflict and, while he seems to be having fun, he does not appear to have peace within himself.

It is here that we get our first insight into what (I believe) Shakespeare is trying to do. Can you see, or at least reasonably speculate, that he is using the

personal lives of English citizens to do more than just put a personal face on the historical events? I propose that we can see the life of Prince Henry as a sort of microcosm of the events that are shaping the history of his country. We can read on and see that, by the end of this same scene, the good Prince is planning a bit of mischief at the expense of his very closest friend, Falstaff. Having been the best of allies only moments ago, he now takes on the roll of adversary without blinking an eye. This reflects the earlier, national news that Hotspur has won a great victory over the Scottish. We shall see later that these same Scots will fight on his side in his bid for the throne. The Scots, of course, were only too eager to join in this battle, as the only reason they were fighting against Hotspur in the first place was because they were trying to get to the King. So the Scots themselves are a bit confused; they want to fight England, but which England shall they fight?

This is a principle with which we should all be familiar. Common experience tells us that a person's inner conflicts will eventually express themselves in that person's relationships with others. Surely, this fact did not escape the notice of Shakespeare, widely renowned as one of history's keenest observers of human nature. And the fact that it appears in this play should not be taken as random or coincidental. Shakespeare was nothing if not deliberate in his writing.

So this scene, in which we are introduced to the prince, concludes with his famous monologue stating that he will soon put aside his idle, aimless lifestyle, and cast off these ill habits that have held him back from his true destiny. He begins by speaking of his friends, saying, "I know you all, and will awhile uphold the unyoked humor of your idleness." Note that the main course of his speech is about the change he has planned to make within himself, but he already recognizes that it will effect his interaction with his friends. Here we leave the personal story of young Hal, and once more look in on the national scene.

Having just read the end of Act I, Scene II, in which Hal announces his determination to put up with idleness in himself and his friends for only a short while longer, we see Scene III open with the King's declaration that he has too long put up with certain lords whose behavior does not promote the nation's general goals. What follows is the first real revelation of a plot being formulated to overthrow the throne. In this plot, most of the Scots who are currently prisoners of Hotspur will be released, and shall in fact become his allies in the battle. In the same way that Prince Hal's inner change is going to affect his relationships with others, England is about to undergo an internal change that will have a profound effect on her international relations. Again we see the events in our protagonist's life reflected in the fortunes of England.

The second act of the play contains a subtle, interior plot point, as Prince Hal and his friends commit their robbery and the prank that follows. It is mentioned in passing that the money they are about to steel belongs to none other than Hal's father: "...There's money of the King's coming down the hill!" Here we get a look into some of the cause of the young prince's inner conflict. The money belongs to that same father who speaks so disapprovingly of Hal, and this gives the prince a chance to rob his own sire. One might wonder at

the chance of it, but there is no chance in a play, all is written. Our author has devised an excellent illustration of the effects of a neglectful policy, whether in the home or in the royal court. As the King has let things go too long within his courts, and his nobles are about to attempt to rob him of his throne and his life, so his neglectful parenthood is about to culminate in theft from within his own bloodline. By the end of this act, the Prince and Falstaff play out their mockery of the King sitting in judgment over Hal's life. It is here that the true turning point can be seen in young Prince Henry. The next time we see him, he will be quite changed.

But before we see this transformation, Act III opens on the conspirators who are planning to overtake the throne, and the first thing we see is bickering and contention between them. This is exactly what the audience would expect from traitors who turn against the rightful king, and we are not disappointed. The same disloyalty that has made Hotspur turn against his own king is now turning him against his allies. This discord in the rebel ranks is immediately contrasted, in scene II, by the conversation between the Prince and his father. In this conversation, Prince Henry speaks like a new man. This is our first look at the regenerate Prince, and at the same time it is the first scene in which we see him interact directly with his father. In this scene, interior and exterior are intertwined.

Act IV returns us to the affairs of state, with the battle about to commence. Just as Hal has set aside those voices within himself that contradicted his one true purpose, so is England about to do away with one or the other of the conflicting factions within her land. At battle's end, the contention for the throne is decided, and the land is at peace. Likewise, the Prince has set foot on his true path, and is also, and finally, at peace with his father and himself. It is at this point that something rather unexpected happens. Sir John Falstaff, speaking at the end of scene IV, says that he too will change his lifestyle. Having seen the day's conflict concluded, he appears inspired to renovate his own habits, "...and live cleanly, as a noble ought."

So, as I asked at the beginning, what does all that mean? What, if anything, is Shakespeare trying to say? We have seen that nearly every event that took place on the national level was mirrored in the characters' personal lives. Why would that be true? [Moving over to the equilateral triangle on the board.] Because Shakespeare understood this great truth; that, just as a mountain range is made up of individual mountains, and those mountains made of individual stones, so too is a nation made of groups of people, and those groups are made of individuals, and each individual is a composite of many separate inner voices [pointing to the notepad-sized rectangle at the center of the Golden Spiral.] The way an individual interacts within himself, [pointing to the larger, notebook-sized rectangle] is going to affect the way that individual interacts with others within his group. And how a group interacts within itself [pointing to the whole Spiral] is going to affect the way it interacts with the other groups that make up a nation, and how those groups interact with each other on the national level is going to effect that nation's interaction with the other nations that make up the

world.

Thus, Shakespeare intertwines the "interior" and "exterior" aspects of the story by revealing to us that these elements were never separate to begin with. Now, I'm not claiming that Shakespeare understood fractal geometry three hundred years before it was formulated, but only that he recognized the patterns of behavior that were common to all human endeavors, great and small. He understood more deeply than most that the world is made of nations and the nations are made of groups, and those groups are made up of individual people, and each person is made of many different parts. And that one man, who finds greatness within himself, can spread that greatness to others, to effect a change that is out of all proportion to the individual. He reveals to us that we are not, and cannot be, truly separate from one another.



In Loving Memory

Melissa Gallop

Selection of Merit

I met the woman who later became my mother-in-law when I was only twelve years old. At the time she was in the process of divorcing my yet-to-be father-in-law after a twenty-five year marriage. I had no real clue why they were divorcing; at twelve you don't ask about those things, but I figured it accounted for her persistently foul attitude. As time went by I passed her unpleasant attitude off to menopause, but after about ten years of that I just attributed it to her being "that way."

During the time I knew her, Pat's life wasn't easy. She had raised six kids in a modest three bedroom house. Three of the kids were still under eighteen when she divorced Steve; the rest were still living at home. Meals weren't fancy; they drank powdered milk, and she kept the temperature so cold in the house during the winter that I wouldn't take my coat off. When she and Steve were married she had new furniture every few years, and Pat would recall times she would take Ruth, now my sister-in-law, on the bus downtown to go shopping at Hudson's. Pat didn't have a lot but she knew how to dress well.

Holidays were always stressful at Pat's house. It always turned out that before the holiday meal was over someone didn't show up, someone walked out, or someone got picked on to no end. I don't know how I would ever have gotten through that if it hadn't been for the fact that my sister married my husband's younger brother and at least we had each other there. Regardless of the anticipated disasters, Pat always made a grand meal of homemade pierogi, sausage, and blueberry pies. The food always looked picture perfect, and Pat never sat down until everyone else was finished. For years I felt guilty because she wouldn't let me help while she fussed, but later I learned it was just her way of showing her love for her family. It wasn't a lot but it was what she could give. Whenever anyone came over she always offered to feed them, even if it was just a grilled cheese sandwich.

After the birth of her first grandchild, Ryan, she would always take him for me when it was time to eat, which was wonderful because it was practically the only time I ever got to eat while my food was still warm. She did so love to dote on him. Ryan remained the only grandchild for nearly four years and Pat did so want a granddaughter. Unfortunately for her, though, the first four grandchildren were all boys; with each of my second and third pregnancies she had to return sweet little pink dresses and things she had purchased in advance. I think she got wise when her own daughter was pregnant and withheld buying in advance; it turned out her daughter had a boy too.

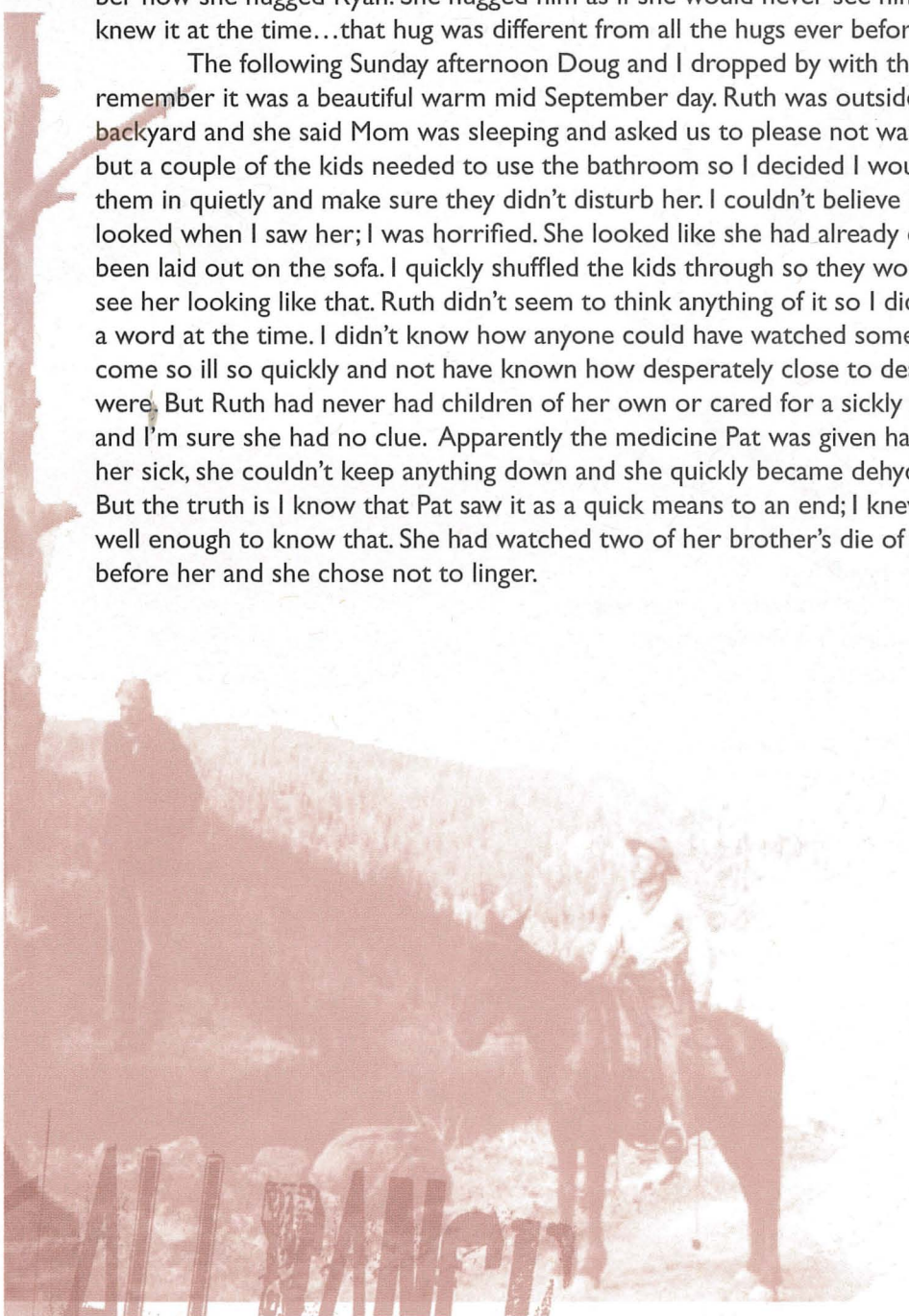
I was so glad that she finally got a granddaughter when my sister and brother-in-law had their firstborn. Unlike my husband Doug and I who got an early start raising our family, they waited nearly seven years after they were married and had been engaged seven years prior to that. Little Melissa was very special to her as were all her grandchildren, but once in a while it would slip that Ryan was her favorite.

Despite how wonderful Pat was with her grandkids, she could be very difficult to be around. She would nit-pick, be insulting, or make an unkind comment from time to time that kept tension in the air. Then one Mother's day I

wrote a few lines in her Mother's Day card about how despite not always seeing eye-to-eye with her that I felt she had been a wonderful grandma to my kids and everything changed. Pat seldom ever said another unkind word to me and she was much more pleasant to be around.

A couple of good years passed when late one August day we learned that Pat had cancer and was given only three to five months to live. Surely I was hopeful that she would at least make it through the holidays. A day or two after I got the news I went to visit her. We had a sweet conversation and we hugged and cried. Doug and I took the kids to go visit with Grandma each of the next two following weekends. But it was the second weekend that I distinctly remember how she hugged Ryan. She hugged him as if she would never see him again. I knew it at the time...that hug was different from all the hugs ever before.

The following Sunday afternoon Doug and I dropped by with the kids. I remember it was a beautiful warm mid September day. Ruth was outside in the backyard and she said Mom was sleeping and asked us to please not wake her, but a couple of the kids needed to use the bathroom so I decided I would walk them in quietly and make sure they didn't disturb her. I couldn't believe how she looked when I saw her; I was horrified. She looked like she had already died and been laid out on the sofa. I quickly shuffled the kids through so they wouldn't see her looking like that. Ruth didn't seem to think anything of it so I didn't say a word at the time. I didn't know how anyone could have watched someone become so ill so quickly and not have known how desperately close to death they were. But Ruth had never had children of her own or cared for a sickly person and I'm sure she had no clue. Apparently the medicine Pat was given had made her sick, she couldn't keep anything down and she quickly became dehydrated. But the truth is I know that Pat saw it as a quick means to an end; I knew her well enough to know that. She had watched two of her brother's die of cancer before her and she chose not to linger.



Brain, Inc.

ANDREW GOTZON

Selection of Merit

My head is full of workers.
They call their factory Brain
And they're the ones who build the thoughts,
The words, the ideas,
And they send them through my mouth,
Through my right hand when holding a pencil,
And through both my hands when they rest on a keyboard.

Tonight, there is a large crowd of workers,
Holding signs and marching,
Yelling things like, "Less work! More sleep!"

There is one worker, standing calm and resolute,
Holding up a wooden sign with both hands.
It says, "For the brain to function properly,
It is necessary to get eight hours of sleep, every night."

(Ever since I took psychology
The workers have been well aware
Of every single right they have.)

Some picketers hold signs that say, "More food!"
And others hate their work so much
That they're holding signs that say,
"Change your major!"

The corners of their signs are poking the soft gray matter,
Making my head hurt.
Only a few workers want to keep going,
But their voices are drowned out,
And they too are poked by signs.

Since I realize the whole factory has shut down,
I fall into bed, close my eyes,
And wait for them to realize
They're getting their wish.

Take Me Fishing

Katie Grzywinowicz

Selection of Merit

Take Me Fishing
Take me fishing.
The walk is not too far.
We talked last night
and while lying in our own beds
you said we could go today.
I couldn't sleep a wink.
I will carry your pole if you want,
I will bait your hook if you want,
I will even give you my bologna sandwich if you want.
When we go, can we race there?
We are going,
aren't we?
Take me fishing.
It isn't too far,
we'll be there in no time
and back before mom serves supper.

Formalities?

KRISTIE LYNCH

Selection of Merit

Formalities
"How are you today?" she asked brightly.
"Not so good," I say.
"Oh," she exclaims aghast, stepping back.
"... Well, my dog ate my homework—
I think I flunked my test—
And I have a splitting headache," I professed.
Stunned by my abnormality,
Not knowing what to say,
She stuck to the formalities,
Uttering, "Have a nice day."
And displaying an uneasy smile,
She quickly walked away.



Burning Love Letters

Lindsay McIntyre

Selection of Merit

Elizabeth Morgan had to be dreaming; she was sure of it. There was no way in real life that she would be in this situation, in this environment. Any moment now, she would awaken warm in her bed and would realize that it was just a dream.

Except that she wasn't dreaming, and she certainly wasn't warm in her bed. Instead, she was sitting on a log on the side of a stock pond with a box of old mementos at her side. Megan, Christina, and Alyssa, her roommates and the masterminds of this plan, were sitting across from her and looking at her expectedly.

"Well," Megan began, "are you ready to do this or not?"

"Guys," Elizabeth protested. "Can't this wait until another time? I'm freezing, it's the middle of the night, and we're in a farmer's field. Even if we don't get caught, this still classifies us as incredibly stupid."

"No," Alyssa told her. "It can't wait. The sooner that we do this, the sooner you get over Nick, and the sooner you can get on with the rest of your life."

Elizabeth sighed. Nick was her ex-boyfriend, and the mementos in the shoe box were all things that he had given her throughout their relationship. Alyssa had gotten the idea to burn them from an episode of "Friends". It was supposed to 'cleanse her aura', or whatever Alyssa had said. After a moment, Elizabeth finally relented. "Fine," she said. "Give me the lighter, and let's get this over with."

Christina handed her the lighter, and Elizabeth grabbed the first item out of the box. It was the very first love letter that Nick had ever sent her. With the flick of her finger, she lit the lighter and held it close to the paper.

The bright light from the flame illuminated the paper, and Elizabeth could see the words scrolled out across it. For a moment, she was taken back in time.

"I love you," Nick had told her while they were standing outside the gym after Homecoming. He was smiling his beautiful smile, and his chocolate-colored eyes twinkled in the moonlight. "You are the only person I want to be with."

Back in the present, Elizabeth began to have second thoughts. "You know, I can't do this," she told her roommates. "I'm going to be burning some of the best memories of my life. I'm not sure I'm ready to do something so permanent."

Megan knelt down so she was eye-level with Elizabeth. She had a look of such sympathy on her face that it almost made Elizabeth want to cry. "Liz, you need to remember something. For every good memory you have of Nick, there are two of him breaking your heart. You aren't burning memories here. You'll always have those; you don't have to get rid of them. You're just burning painful reminders of the past that aren't allowing you to move on to the future. You know what they say: out of sight, out of mind."

Elizabeth knew she was right. Tonight was the night to put the past away. With another swift movement of her fingers, the flame appeared again. This time, the lighter made contact with the paper, and in an instant, it went up in flames. A moment later, the paper burned completely, and all that was left was the dark-

ness of the cool, fall night.

"That felt good, didn't it?" Alyssa asked her.

"Yeah," replied Elizabeth, not making eye contact. She picked up another memento. This time it was a ticket stub from their first date. In a flash of fire, the stub met the same fate as the letter. One by one, Elizabeth burned letters, cards, and pictures until she thought she had burned everything in the box.

When she was through, her roommates broke into applause. "See," Christina said. "Don't you feel so much better?"

"I do feel a little better," admitted Elizabeth.

"Okay, then, let's get out of here. I'm freezing."

Bending over to put the lid of the shoebox back on, Elizabeth stopped for a moment. She thought she had burned everything, but apparently she hadn't. There, stuck in the folds of the cardboard, was Nick's senior picture. She hesitated, unsure of what exactly to do with me. Should she call her roommates back for one last burning, or should she just call it a night and forget about the photo?

"Liz, are you coming?" Christina's voice startled Elizabeth out of her thoughts. Her roommate was suddenly standing in front of her. "What's taking you so long?" Christina's eyes shifted downward at the box. "You didn't forget anything did you?"

"No," Elizabeth lied. "I was just making sure I got everything."

Three months later, Elizabeth was alone in her dorm room. Her roommates were still in class, so she partook in one her favorite pastimes: singing loudly and dancing along with the radio.

She was in a glorious mood. It was just two days until Christmas break, and that night, she, her roommates, and her new boyfriend, Jason, were going out to dinner to celebrate the end of exams. Outside, the sky was cotton-colored and big snowflakes fell from the sky and onto the piles of snow already on the ground.

Elizabeth was in mid-dance when her cell phone rang. She had been expecting a call from Jason, so she didn't bother checking the Caller ID. Turning down the radio, she twirled one last time, and answered the phone. "Hello," she sang out happily.

"Elizabeth?" a male voice asked uncertainly on the other end.

In that instant, all the joy poured out of her. She knew that voice. Never in a million years would she have expected to ever here that voice again. She sat down on her desk chair and brushed her long blonde hair out of her face before answering. "Nick, how's it going?"

"It's great to hear your voice, Liz," he told her. "It's been forever since I've heard it. Have you missed me?"

"How did you get my phone number?" Elizabeth asked him, dodging his question. "I changed it after we broke up."

"Crystal gave it to me," he said. "I didn't think it would be a big deal to call you. After all, we're still friends, right?"

"Sure," Elizabeth replied sarcastically. She made a mental note to give Crystal a piece of her mind the next time she saw her. "So, what's up?"

"I'm in town, and I was wondering if you wanted to get together and have some coffee."

Elizabeth was immediately suspicious. There was no reason why Nick should "be in town". He went to school in Ohio, and their hometown was a good hundred miles south of Elizabeth's school. "Actually, Nick," she told him coolly. "I have plans tonight with my friends and my boyfriend."

"Aw, come on, Elizabeth," he pleaded. He was turning on the charm now. "It's two in the afternoon. You can meet me for some coffee and still get back in time to go out with your friends." When she hesitated, he continued, "Come, on. We're both adults. Everything that went on with us is water under the bridge now. We can be friends."

Water under the bridge, indeed, Elizabeth thought. He's not the one who's had a hard time getting over the relationship. She thought of her letter-burning session from months before, and Megan's speech about putting the past away. Maybe one final meeting with Nick could resolve her feelings. "Where do you want to meet?" she asked him.

"You know the coffee shop on Bay?" Elizabeth could hear the smile in his voice.

"Yeah. I'll meet you there in twenty minutes."

"All right. I'll see you then."

Elizabeth flipped her phone shut and immediately hated herself. She knew exactly what her roommates would say if they were there. She had no business going to meet him. That she risked opening old wounds and spending another three years getting over him just by laying eyes on him. Elizabeth shook off the feeling of dread as she pulled on her red boots and slipped into her huge down coat. She was in the middle of rooting around her top drawer in an attempt to find her gloves, when she came across the picture.

It was Nick's senior picture, the one she was supposed to burn, but didn't. After she got back to her room, she had placed the picture in her top drawer, where, for the most part, it had stayed. The only times she had taken the picture out was when she was feeling lonely or particularly nostalgic. Now, she looked at her high school sweetheart's smiling face and the feeling of dread returned to her stomach. Determined not to chicken out, Elizabeth grabbed her car keys and headed out the door.

The snow was falling heavily on the unsalted roads, and Elizabeth struggled to keep the car on the road. To keep her mind off of things, she turned on the car radio. Christmas carols were on the first station. Irritated at the sound of happy music when she was in a foul mood, she changed the station. More Christmas music. Elizabeth changed the station one more time.

She immediately regretted doing it. The song playing was the song that she and Nick had claimed as there own all those years before. Elizabeth hadn't heard in a long time, since just after the break-up.

"I can't believe you're doing this to me," Elizabeth had told Nick, tears streaming down her cheeks. "You told me that you loved me, that I was the only one."

"Things change, Liz," he had replied coldly. "You know, you're away at college, and I'm a senior in high school. Do you know how many hot underclassmen there are? I would be a fool to pass an opportunity to pass it up."

The memory of it still stung all these years later, and Elizabeth began to wonder if it would ever stop stinging. Maybe no amount of letter-burning or new boyfriends would ever take the pain away. She pulled the car into the parking lot and braced herself for this encounter.

The bell on the door jingled merrily as Elizabeth entered the coffee shop. She could smell the rich sent of coffee and hear the chugging of the espresso machine in the background. She looked around at the various patrons, but couldn't find Nick. For a minute, she was hopeful that Nick hadn't shown after all, and she was off the hook.

That hope died a painful death the moment she spotted Nick in a back booth. He looked up, saw her, and broke into his gorgeous smile. Elizabeth went weak in the knees, and all of a sudden, she was seventeen again. She came to her senses and walked over to the booth.

"You look beautiful," he told her, as she slid into the seat. "Although, I wouldn't expect anything less from the legendary Elizabeth Morgan."

"What's up, Nick?" she replied, trying to keep her cool.

"I came to see you. Can't two friends meet and talk over some coffee?"

Elizabeth glared at him. It was just like him to turn on the charm in an effort to forget all the things he had done to her, as if the past had never happened. Before she could reply, the waitress came to take their order.

"I'll take a double latte with extra foam," Nick told the waitress flirtatiously, while Elizabeth rolled her eyes.

"And for you, miss?" the waitress asked Elizabeth.

'Water with lemon," Elizabeth answered, not taking her eyes off of Nick. "I won't be here long."

Nick's face fell for a moment, and then turned hard. "Look," he said as the waitress went back towards the counter. "I really hope you didn't come here for a fight, because you blaming me for everything that goes wrong in your life is getting kind of old."

"I don't blame you for everything that goes wrong," shot back Elizabeth. "I blame you for cheating on me and breaking my heart."

"Look, I didn't cheat—"

"Yes, you did, Nick," she interrupted. "But that's neither here nor there right now. I'm not here for a fight. I'm here to figure out once and for all what exactly you want from me."

"I want to get back together," he said. "I love you, Liz. I miss you. I think we could rebuild our relationship, and in time, get back to where we used to be."

Elizabeth stared at him thoughtfully for a moment. She had a tough decision to make. She could either agree to get back together with someone who broke her heart, or leave the shop right now and leave behind someone who had once meant the world to her. Either way, she was certain she would end up hurt again. She was truly between a rock and a hard place.

Her thoughts turned to some of the most important people in her life. Alyssa, Christina, and Megan, who had listened to her cry about Nick and had organized a way for her to try and get over him. And then there was Jason, who was so good to her and had made her happier than she ever imagined she could be. If she went back to Nick, she risked losing her friends, and she would certainly lose Jason.

Tearfully, she turned towards the window. The snow had tapered a bit, and the beautiful big flakes were lazily falling again. She turned back to Nick, knowing in her heart what she needed to do. "I don't think we can do that, Nick. I don't think we can go back to what we had."

Nick's face was an interesting combination of puzzled and hurt. "Well maybe not now, but later…" he trailed off.

"No, Nick, not ever."

"Well, can we at least be friends?"

Elizabeth stood up from the table. She threw a few dollars down and looked Nick square in the eye. "No, we can't. We weren't friends before we got together, and I can't see it working now. Friends can become loves, but loves can't become friends."

She started towards the door, tears stinging her blue eyes. As she walked away, she looked over her shoulder. "I hope you have a wonderful life, Nick. I really mean that."

The tears spilled over as Elizabeth climbed into the car. She covered her eyes with her gloves and placed her head on her steering wheel, sobbing. After she gained her composure, she put the car in reverse and drove away. A combination of sorrow and relief filled her as she returned to her dorm.

Her sobs had ceased as she let herself back into the dorm. Luckily, none of her roommates were home, so she didn't have to explain herself. Elizabeth climbed the stairs to her room and collapsed into a heap on her bed. Reaching into her coat pocket for a tissue, she discovered Nick's picture. She was unsure what to do with it. She could very easily rip it into pieces and throw it into the trash. Instead, she threw it into the top drawer of her dresser.

Two years later, it was spring, and Elizabeth had graduated college. After the diplomas were handed out and pictures with family were taken, Elizabeth slipped out of the restaurant where her celebratory dinner was being held and into her car. She drove back to campus, parking across the road. She had one final thing to do before she said good-bye to college life for good.

Elizabeth tip-toed through the freshly plowed earth towards the stock pond where she had burned love letters all those years ago. She was ruining her white high-heels, but she didn't care. This was going to worth it. Once she arrived at the pond, Elizabeth settled herself on the old, familiar log. The diamond engagement ring, a present from Jason a few hours earlier, glittered in the starlight. She smiled and shifted through her purse until she found the two items she was looking for.

In her left hand, she held a lighter. In her right, the senior picture she had failed to get rid of for all those years. Once again, she glanced down at it, but

this time, Elizabeth had no second thoughts. With a flick of her finger, the flame appeared. She held the flame next to the picture, and immediately the photo caught fire. When the flame became too much, Elizabeth dropped it into the stock pond and smiled again.

"It's spring," she said aloud to herself. "It's a time for new beginnings."



Untitled (No One...)

Sarah Merritt

Selection of Merit

NO ONE GETS OUT ALIVE: a message written in red paint dripped from above the doorway. The double doors of the main entrance were chained and pad locked.

"Okay guys, this isn't funny anymore. Unlock these doors right now!" Liz said calmly, trying to hold back her own fear. She set her swim bag down on the counter and started looking for her rubber band to tie her long blond hair up.

"I swear to God we didn't do this..." Ray tried to explain.

"Yeah, right! You guys have been trying to scare me all day. Enough is enough. Look, the kids are scared to death, so just unlock the doors so we can leave." She finished tying her hair back and walked over to where the guys where standing, messing around with the doors.

"I told you I didn't do this. We shut off the electricity, but we turned everything back on. There must be someone else here." Ray said calmly. He carefully examined the doors.

But everyone else had already left. The YMCA closes at 5pm on Sundays. Everyone from the swim team, including the coaches had left an half hour ago.

"Maybe its one of the residents playing a joke on us." Ryan finally said as he walked back to the group after playing with the chains on the doors.

"But we only have two guys staying here. And I don't think either one of them would do this."

Ryan walked towards the stairs. "It doesn't hurt to double check. We need to make sure. Ray, you come with me. DJ, you stay with the girls...."

"Yeah, right, so you two can scare the hell out of us. I'll go with you and Ray can stay with DJ and the girls." Liz said as she headed towards the stairs.

Knowing there was no way to win this, he agreed and instructed Ray and DJ to keep the girls in the central office and not to let anyone wander around, although there wasn't really anywhere else to go. Every door on the main floor had been locked. The side door had also been chained and locked. The only places to go were up towards the gyms and residence floor and down to the duffy, a place where no one dared to venture alone.

Ryan and Liz disappeared upstairs. After making it up the first flight of stairs, Ryan stopped and turned towards Liz. "You don't trust me much, do you?"

Liz paused for a minute, shocked by his question, "You never gave me much of a reason to. It's nothing personal, I just have trouble trusting any guy," she finally stated as she continued up the stairs.

He suddenly grabbed her by the arm, pulling her close. "I'm not just some stranger you met off the street, damn it! We were together for five months. When will you forgive me? I told I was sorry. What more do you want from me? "

"Do we have to talk about this now?" she asked as she tried to break away from his hold, but he wouldn't let go of her. She felt like screaming, I just want you to leave me alone instead of looking at him, his short brown hair, dark green eyes, perfect smile.

He took her hand and pressed it against his chest. She could feel his rapid heartbeat. "You still make my heart race. Every time I see you, I just can't

help myself. I know I messed up, but I still love you and I never meant to hurt you."

She slid her hand around his neck, as he pulled her closer to him. He looked deep into her blue eyes and softly kissed her....

"Do you girls want some popcorn?" Jen asked as she moved towards the central office, where they kept all the supplies and the popcorn machine. She was hoping for any sort of distraction to keep them occupied.

They all nodded in agreement. Before swim practice had started, one of the parents had called Liz to see if she could babysit Anna and Emily for weekend. Liz had babysat for the girls before and couldn't say no to watching them for the weekend. She felt like a big sister to them. Emily, being the youngest swimmer on the team, always clung to Liz's side at every practice, meet, and anytime in between. Anna, who was only twelve years old, looked up to Liz for advice and encouragement.

Liz and Jen had basically grown up in the pool together. They both joined the YMCA swim team together when they were Emily's age. They always had a strong bond, sometimes feeling more like sisters than friends. When Jen was offered the head coaching job, she couldn't think of any one more perfect for the position of assistant coach than Liz.

"When is Coach Liz coming back? She's been gone for a long time," Anna asked as she and Emily helped Jen scoop the popcorn into one big bowl.

"I'm sure she'll be back soon, sweetie. Don't worry," she said calmly. She turned towards Ray and gave him a worried look, hoping the girls didn't see. He tried his best to smile back at her, but he couldn't hide the fact that he was beginning to worry, too.

She pulled away and started walking upstairs again. "We really should hurry." Liz was afraid if they had kept going that things might go too far again, and she wasn't ready for that yet.

Ryan followed behind, still a little confused by what had just happened. Neither one spoke as they made their way to the fourth floor. He took the keys from her and unlocked the door.

"Hello? Is anyone here?" Ryan called into a dark, empty hallway. He and Liz started waking towards the first room.

He knocked, waited a few seconds, and then Ryan unlocked the door. Empty. They did the same with the other rooms, not excepting to find much. And then they came to the last two rooms.

Liz knocked. "Mr. Smith, are you in there? It's Liz and Ryan from the YMCA staff. We need to ask you a few questions, please." They waited for a response, but there was only silence. Liz nodded to Ryan, who unlocked the door. "Mr. Smith, are you in here?" Liz repeated as they walked in.

Ryan flipped on the light switch. They stood in horror and shock at the sight of Mr. Smith's body lying in a pool of blood on his bed. Liz walked closer, trying to see if he was still alive. But it was too late. His throat had been slashed. Liz ran out as Ryan shut off the light and followed behind.

Liz felt teardrops roll down her face. She didn't know Mr. Smith, but the

sight of his body was too much for her to bear. Ryan put his arm around her shoulders, pulling her close to him. "Come on, let's check out the other room." Ryan said as he headed towards Mr. Johnston's room across the hall. Ryan knocked on his door, waited a few seconds before unlocked it.

The room was empty. There was one more room to check out, the shower room. The residents shared a small community bathroom. As they made their way down the hall, they heard the showers running. Ryan was the first to enter. Liz waited out in the hall, for the sake of Mr. Johnston's privacy.

The room was hot and steamy.

"Mr. Johnston? Are you in here?" Ryan called out to the steam. No one answered.

Ryan walked to the first shower stall, pulled back the curtain and found it empty. He reached in and turned off the shower. He moved down to the second and third stall and found them empty as well. He walked to the fourth and final shower stall.

He pulled back the curtain and found their missing resident. Mr. Johnston was hanging from the a pipe with a rope around his neck. Like Mr. Smith, his throat had also been slashed.

Ryan felt like he was going to be sick as he made his way towards the door, only to stop right before. Something on the mirror had caught his attention. A note, written in what looked like blood: TOO LATE!! Ryan rushed out of the room, almost knocking Liz down as he grabbed her hand. They made their back to the stairs, as Ryan filled Liz in on what he had seen.

"We need to call the police!" Liz said as they ran made their way back to the main floor.

"What took you guys so long? What happened up there?" Jen asked as she and the guys walked towards them.

Liz ran to the counter and grabbed her cell phone. She tried to dial 911, but her battery was dead. Of all the days for her not to have her charger with her, she thought sarcastically. She looked at Ryan, who grabbed his phone from his pocket and tried calling out as well. He threw it down on the ground after not being able to get a signal. DJ, Ray and Jen also tried their phones too, but no one was able to get enough of a signal.

"There must be interference somewhere in the building."

Ryan, trying to catch his breath after running down the four floors of stairs, motioned to the group to follow him near the service entrance, which also had locks and chains on it. He quickly told them what they had found, making sure to keep his voice down. He didn't want Anne and Emily to hear this. No need to freak them out anymore then they already are. "There's got to be someone else in this building. We need to check out every inch."

They agreed that Liz and DJ would stay with the girls while the others would explore the duffy and the boiler room. Liz went into one of the offices and brought out the TV and DVD player for the girls to watch a movie. Ryan and Ray went into the central office and grabbed flashlights and walkie-talkies. Ryan handed one to Ray and Jen as they headed towards the stairs. They started going

down.

He pulled Liz aside." Make sure the girls stay by your side at all times. Don't tell them anything. They don't need to know what's going on. If they ask, just make up something and promise them we'll all go out for pizza or something…."

Liz cut him off. "I know, Ryan. Don't worry, we'll be okay." He nodded and started walking towards the stairs. Liz grabbed his arm. "Hey, try to stay out of trouble. Please be careful." She said with a smile. Ryan smiled back at her and kissed her on the cheek.

Ray and Jen reappeared. "Are you coming?"

"Yeah, I'm coming." He said as they waited for him. He turned his attention back to Liz. "I'll be back soon, I promise. Remember to lock the doors to the central office. Keep DJ with you," he said as he ran off to join the others as Liz walked to the central office, where the girls were waiting impatiently for her.

"DJ, will you lock the all doors, please?" she asked as she handed him the keys. "Okay girls. Do you want to watch Shrek or Scooby Doo?"

Several minutes later, the girls were sitting in front of the TV, watching Shrek as Liz and DJ sat in the corner, close to them, but still able to talk quietly without the girls hearing.

"Are you alright?" DJ asked as he wrapped his jacket around Liz's shoulders.

"No, I'm really freaked out now."

DJ wrapped his arms around her, drawing her close to him. "Don't worry, I won't let anything happen to you, I promise."

"Alright, let's check out the boiler room first," Ryan said as he unlocked the boiler room. "You two take the first levels and I'll take the lower ones."

Ryan flipped on the light switch, but nothing came on. Oh, great! He thought to himself. It's bad enough I have to be down here in the first place, but now the freaking lights are out! What else can go wrong today? He turned on his flashlight and shrugged to the others. They started walking around as Ryan made his way to the stairs.

He had only been down here once with Liz when they were going out. The pool pumped had shut off and she didn't want to go down by herself. They fixed the pump and ended up making out afterwards...ahh. The good old times. He thought to himself with a smile on his face.

He walked towards a narrow hallway, towards the pool pumps. He wiped the sweat from his forehead as he continued down another set of stairs. The boiler room goes down pretty far, and controls just about everything in the YMCA.

Not wanting to be gone for too long, he glanced around once before turning back around. Heading back towards the stairs, he left something drip onto his shoulder.

"What the hell?" he asked. He shined his flashlight up towards the higher levels.

Drip. Drip. Drip. He looked around, trying to find the source of the

noise. Oh, great. More leaky pipes. This place really is falling apart. He felt another drip onto his arm, something dark...blood. He looked up and saw Tom, the maintenance person, hanging by his neck, with blood dripping from a knife embedded in his chest.

Ryan dropped his flashlight and ran for the stairs. "Where are you guys?" he shouted into his walkie talkie after running down the hall towards the first set of stairs.

"Up by the washing machine. What the hell is going on? What did you find?" Ray shouted back from above.

"Tim's dead! We need to get the hell out of here." Ryan said as he ran back to the upper level.

Before any of them could respond, they heard several loud crashes coming from the Duffy Center, followed by the sound of glass shattering.

Up in the central office, Liz felt the room shake, followed by a loud thundering sound. DJ and Liz just looked at each other for a brief moment. Both Emily and Anne jumped up from their seats and ran to Liz's side. She held them close. She gave DJ a worried look, too shocked for words.

"Maybe I should go check that out..." he said as he got up and walked to the door. "Stay with the girls and keep the door locked. I'll be right back." He unlocked the door and disappeared into the darkness before she had a chance to protest.

Liz quickly got up and locked it again. "Everything is okay. Don't worry, I won't let anything bad happen." Liz said calmly as she sat back down in her chair.

"Will you sing us a song? Our mom used to sing to us whenever we got scared at night." Emily asked as she climbed onto Liz's lap.

Anne sat on the floor, right next to her as Liz cleared her throat. The poor little things, Liz thought to herself. She was willing to do anything to keep their minds occupied. They last thing they needed was to worry about how they were to get out of here alive.

"Starlight, star bright. You're the first star I see tonight. I wish I may, and I wish I might. To have this wish tonight..."

"Guys, where are you?" DJ cried out into the darkness. He started walking towards the boiler room.

Ryan emerged from the doorway, nearly blinded DJ with his flashlight.

"Easy there, killer. You mind not shining that damn light in my eyes," DJ said as he squinted.

Ryan lowered his flashlight to the ground, looking pissed off that DJ was down here and not with Liz. "What the hell are you doing down here? I thought I told you to stay upstairs with the girls."

"Hey, I thought I would come down here and make sure you guys were okay. We heard a loud crash." Before giving him a chance to respond, DJ quickly added, "And Liz is fine. I told her to stay put and not leave the girls alone."

Ryan, unsure whether or not to trust him, decided it was best not to start an argument. Liz was safe, and as far as he was concerned, that's all that mattered for the moment. But now, they had to find out who was in the Duffy.

With Ray and Jen by his side and DJ leading the way, they walked together down the hall towards the duffy center.

What they found was a mess. The machines that used to be so neatly lined up against the wall were smashed. Barbells and weights were everywhere. All the mirrors were smashed, wires from the weight machines were scattered everywhere.

"Well, at least we know where the sound came from." Jen said, trying to hide her own fear. They walked into the Acheson room, where more weight machines were kept. Nothing seemed to be out of place in here, so they walked back into the duffy.

Following the track around, they kept looking at the damage. There was no way one person could do this by himself. They made it all the way back to the small room where they kept a punching bag and speed bag. Little did they know that while they were searching for answers, someone was on the outside, locking them in. They never even heard the chains being wrapped around the door handles.

"I've been dreaming for the longest time for my dream of dreams to come true. And I've been praying for the longest time that you could be here too. So starlight, star bright. You're the first star I see tonight. I wish I may and I wish I might. Have this dream to-night.."

"That was so pretty," the girls said in unison

"How about I put in Scooby Doo and make some more popcorn, okay?" The girls nodded as returned to their chairs by the TV. She pressed play on the DVD player and then went to make more popcorn. She also went to the fridge and grabbed a bottle of fruit punch. She poured two glasses and scooped up a big bowl of freshly made popcorn and then handed the girls their snacks.

Liz pulled her chair closer to them, unaware of a dark figure standing outside the door, watching and waiting for her...

"This is so creepy." Jen said as she punched the bag. When it twirled around, she let out a small scream.

Taped on the other side of the bag was a picture of Liz and Ryan from when they were dating, with a knife stabbed through his face. Ryan stared at it for a moment, before ripping it down and crumping it into a ball. He threw it on the floor as they walked back out onto the track.

On the last mirror behind the barbells was a message, written in thick red letters: SHE'S ALL MINE!! In a fit of rage, Ryan took a barbell that was on the ground and threw it hard against the mirror, shattering it into a thousands little pieces.

"I think I know who is doing this.." Ray said as he ran back into the Acheson Center. Without waiting for the others to follow, he made his way to the employee desk and started going through the drawers. He grabbed a set of keys and ran towards the back of the room, where Duffy employees used a small set of lockers.

He opened one small locker. Inside was a yellow folder. Ryan, who was right behind him, reached in and took it out. Pictures of Liz and Ryan scattered

on the floor. Jen quickly bent down to pick them up and Ryan picked up a old, torn up notebook.

"Oh my God!" Jen exclaimed. "Ryan, you need to take a look at these." She handed Ryan a handful of pictures.

Each picture was of Liz. There were pictures of her at work, of her getting into her car, at home, even with Ryan on their dates. He had followed her each day, making notes on the back of them, describing how she walked with confidence, how she smiled so innocently. He even followed her to Ryan's apartment, taking pictures of him and her on Ryan's couch.

Some of the pictures looked like they were a year old. There must of been hundreds of pictures. But why would he bring these to work when he knew people go through these drawers everyday? Did he really want to get caught or was he just that stupid? No, he was much smarter than that. He must of wanted him to find these.

"Hey, listen to this: October 10, 2006. 'Liz walks with such confidence. I love the way her long beautiful hair sway when she walks down the pool stairs.'" Ray read from the notebook. "Some of this stuff is pretty sick. October 15, 2006 'The little bitch has no idea who she is fucking with? Does she honestly believe that Ryan can protect her from me? I will make that little slut pay for what she has done to me. She will be begging for mercy by the time I'm done with her.'"

"We need to get upstairs now!" Ryan said as he and Ray shoved the folder and notebook back into the locker. Ryan walked to the door and tried to push it open. But it wouldn't budge. He ran back into the Duffy Center and tried the other doors. They wouldn't open either. That's when Ryan noticed the chains and locks on the door handle, locking them in and leaving Liz alone with a psycho on the loose..

Liz jumped from her seat as she heard a soft tap on the window. Taking her flashlight, she went to unlock the door, thinking that it was only DJ or Ryan. She opened the door, but no one was out there.

"Hello? Is someone out there? DJ? Ryan?" she called out into the darkness. But was answered by only silence. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw a dark figure slowly moving towards her. "Who's there?" She shined her flashlight at it. She felt a little relieved when she saw Jon's face. Jon was on the cleaning crew and worked part time down in the Duffy.

"Easy there, it's only me," Jon said with a laugh. "Someone locked in the Duffy storage closet." He stepped closer to her.

"Where's Ryan and everyone else?" she asked as she took a step back. She had always liked Jon, but felt a little uneasy whenever they were alone together.

"He's up on the third floor. He wanted me to take you up there."

She backed up another step. "I can't leave the girls by themselves," she said as she looked towards them. Emily's eyes were practically glued the TV as Anne watched Liz from her seat. He had this look in his eyes, as he stepped closer to her.

She turned and tried to run back into the office, but before she had a

chance to take one step, Jon grabbed her. He slapped her hard against the face, knocking her out. He picked her up and threw her over his shoulders, as if she was a rag doll and headed upstairs.

Anne grabbed her sister's hand and they hid behind one of the desks....

Ray ran back in the Duffy and grabbed a 50lb weight that was on the floor. He threw it as hard as he could against the glass door. With a loud crash, it shattered into thousands of little pieces and scattered on the floor.

Everyone ducked under the door handles and ran back up to the first floor. DJ was the first to reach the central office, noticing the door wide open.

"We're too late. He's got her already." He quickly ran to check the doors. They were all still locked. "They have to still be here." DJ said as he returned to the group.

"Where are the girls?" Jen asked as she entered the central office. As soon as she had said that, Anne's head popped up. She and Emily ran to her side, nearly knocking her down as they hugged her. "Are you okay?"

They both nodded. " Jon lied to her. He said that you guys went upstairs and wanted her to go with him..." Anne started to say in a hurry. "But she didn't want to. So he hit her really hard and carried her away."

"Anne, I need you to think really hard." Ray said as he knelt down to her level. "Did you see where he took her?"

"I don't know...You have to find her," she said as the tears started running down her face. Jen pulled her close to her.

"We will, sweetheart, I promise." Ray stood back up and turned towards Ryan and DJ. "Let's start with the second floor and move upward. He couldn't have gone too far. All the doors are still locked. DJ, I want you to stay with Jen and the girls. Don't let her out of your sight this time! Ryan, you come with me."

They headed towards the stairs when Ray stopped suddenly. He shined his flashlight on the steps after noticing what looked like a small dark puddle. On each step was a single, dark red rose petal.

"He's making this too easy for us," Ray said as he began climbing the stairs.

"No, he's just not being very original. He's imitating the same thing that I did for Liz last Valentines's Day. I told her that I had to work late that night. I wanted to surprise her, so I asked her to meet me here and then I left a rose at the front desk, asking her to follow her heart and the trail of red rose petals that I left on each step.

"I arranged for a candlelight dinner on the third floor. I had soft music playing, flowers, and candles everywhere. I even paid my little sister twenty bucks to cook a romantic dinner."

"Did she like it?" Ray asked as they reached the second the floor.

"Yeah, she loved it. I'll never forget the look on her face." They stepped into the hallway for a quick check, not really excepting to find anything. They walked towards the gyms and then down by the volleyball courts.

They started going back upstairs. "So, are you going to tell me why you and Liz broke up?" Ray asked as they made their way up to the third floor.

"I really messed up. I got really drunk one night and ended up in a hotel room with one of her friends. I don't really remember what had happened, but apparently her friend told Liz that we slept together. We got in a huge fight and she told me to stay the hell away from her. So that's what I did. I told her that I loved her and always will, and left. We haven't really talked about it since then."

"You still love her?"

"Yeah, I don't know what I will do if anything ever happens to her."

"Nothing will happen to her, I promise. And this time, whatever you do, don't make the same mistake with her. She means a lot to me, and if you hurt her, there's no safe place for you to hide," Ray said very seriously as they reached the third floor.

Ryan nodded understandingly. Ryan knew that Ray had feelings for her deep down inside, but saw her more as a little sister. He knew that he was only looking out for her and never felt threaten by their friendship.

They followed the trail of rose petals down the hall. The door was closed, but unlocked. Ray was the first to enter the room. It was pitch dark, except for the single glow of a long candle in the center of the room. Ray hit the light switch.

Liz, sitting in a chair with her hands behind her back, slowly lifted her head. The side of her face had already started to bruise from where Jon must of hit her. He hair was loosely hanging down by her shoulders. She was wearing a long red dress, very similar to the one she had wore on Valentine's Day. She had a red scarf tied around her mouth.

Ryan quickly rushed to her side and began to untie the scarf. A tear ran down her cheek as he softly wiped it away. He began to untie her hands when Jon appeared from behind the closet door. He stepped towards them, pulling out a gun from his pocket.

Ryan slowly stood up. "Let her go." Ryan demanded. But Jon just smiled. He kept moving closer to them as Ryan backed off.

He pointed his gun at Ryan and fired one shot, hitting him in the shoulder. Liz screamed as she watched her close friend collapse on the floor. Jon slapped her hard against the face, trying to shut her up. Ryan took a step towards Ray, but Jon pointed the gun at him.

"You never could fight me like a man. You always have to cheat at everything you do. You have no imagination. Go ahead, get it over with. It's not going to make her love you, you'll never be half the man that I am." Ryan said calmly.

"She'll learn to love me over time, with you out of the picture." Jon replied as he softly stroked her cheek. "Do you know how long I've wanted you, how long I've waited for you? All I want for you to do is look at me the same way you look at him, to love me and no one else. Do you have any idea how much it tears me up inside to see you with this loser!" Jon started to shout. "But it's okay, everything is going to be okay. You'll be mine soon and everything will be okay, I promise my love. I'll make everything alright." Jon softly stroked her hair.

She turned her head away from him. 'I'll never love you. No matter what

you do, my feelings will never change. I love Ryan." She said as she looked at Ryan. "I'm so sorry, I should have told you sooner…."

In a fit of rage, Jon walked towards Ryan and pointed the gun right at his heart, but then changed his mind. He lowered the gun and threw it on the floor. He quickly punched Ryan in the face, sending him to the floor. Ryan quickly got up and tackled Jon to the ground. They rolled around a little until Ryan was on top of Jon. He punched him over and over again. He grabbed his head and slammed it hard against the floor. Jon stopped moving, so Ryan got up and ran towards Liz.

He quickly untied her. Feeling a little steady, Ryan helped her out of her chair. He held her close to him, softly stroking her hair. He didn't see Jon reach for his gun and point at right at Liz. Out of the corner of his eye, Ryan saw Jon get to his feet. He quickly pushed Liz of the way as a shot was fired.

Jon dropped his gun as blood began to pour from his arm. He turned to see Ray holding a gun before he dropped to his knees. Ryan pulled Liz close to him again, both a little shaken by what had just happened, and surprised to see Ray walking towards Jon, placing handcuffs on him.

"Let's go, on your feet," Ray ordered, helping him to his feet. Before they left the room, Ray turned to Ryan and Liz. "I thought I told you about my new job on the police force," he joked as he escorted Jon out.

Emily and Anne nearly tackled Liz as she and Ryan reached the main floor, with tears of joy running down their faces. Ray found the key to the locks in Jon's pocket. He unlocked the doors and handed Jon to the officers, who were waiting outside. He stepped aside as more officers entered the building.

"Good work, Raymond." Captain Anderson said as Ray handed him Jon's folder and journal.

Ray escorted Liz and the girls outside where an EMS was stationed and waiting for them. Red and blue lights flashed as more men in uniform hurried into the YMCA to secure the area. Liz refused medical treatment, more worried about Ray's injuries than her own minor scrapes and bruises.

"Are you okay?" she asked as a paramedic attended to his shoulder.

"I'll survive. What about you, are you okay?" He motioned to another cop to bring a blanket for her. He took the blanket and wrapped it around her shoulders.

"Yeah, I'll be okay." She smiled towards Ryan, who was busy talking to Captain Anderson. She couldn't help but laugh at him as she saw Anne and Emily clinging to his side. She felt like she was falling in love with him all over again.

"I'm sorry, I should have told you what was going on. I guess I was trying to protect you. Part of my promotion is to do some undercover work and lead a task force. That's why I've been so secretive lately. I didn't want to alarm anyone about what I knew or at least suspected."

"Ray, you don't have to explain it all. I'm so grateful that you are here. You've always been my guardian angel."

"Yeah, I guess some things never change. You know, Ryan really does care

about you. And I know you still care about him. You two have been through so much together. If you can survive this, you and Ryan can survive anything. And if he hurts you again, I told him that I would chase him down and tear him from limb to limb." he said with a smile. With his uninjured arm, he put it around her shoulder, pulling her close and he softly kissed her on the forehead.

"Always playing the role of the big brother, huh? Yeah, I know he still loves me. And I think I'm falling for him all over again."

Ryan finished giving his statement as he and Captain Anderson walked towards them. "Are you ready to go?" Ryan asked. Liz just nodded as she gave the blanket back to Ray. "How are you doing?" He asked Ray.

"Not too bad. I'll give you a call later."

Ryan drove Liz and the girls to Liz's house, while DJ and Jen stayed with Ray. Ryan waited in the dining room as Liz tucked the girls in for bed, where they quickly fell asleep. She went to her room to change into a pair of jeans and a sweatshirt before going back downstairs.

Ryan followed Liz into the living room where they both collapsed on the couch. Liz rested her head on his shoulder as he softly stroked her hair. Neither one said a word, for there was nothing else to be said. Everything that had happened in the past no longer seemed to matter. All their arguments, all the cheating, and the lies no longer seemed important. She was back in his arms again, the world could melt for all she cared. It didn't matter anymore.

Liz turned to face him. He pulled her face close to his and kissed her softly. Wanting more, Liz pulled him on top of her as she laid down. She began to take off his shirt as he kissed her neck. Within seconds his shirt was on the floor. They rolled to the floor with Liz on top. He began unhooking her bra as she let out a soft moan.

He started kissing her deeper, more passionately as if he couldn't get enough of her. Suddenly, she heard a scream coming from the girls' room. She quickly threw her sweatshirt on and ran upstairs with Ryan following behind, pulling on his t-shirt as well.

She found Emily crying in her bed as Anne cradled her little sister. "What's wrong, sweetie?" she asked as she hugged Emily.

"I had a bad dream. Will you stay with me until I fall asleep?" Emily asked in a meek voice as Liz wiped away her tears.

"Of course I will, sweetheart." She looked at Ryan as if telling him to wait downstairs. He nodded and left the room. Liz tucked Anne and Emily back into their beds. She sat on the edge of Emily's bed, softly rubbing her back and humming softly to the song she sang to them earlier.

Ten minutes later, with both girls fast asleep, Liz walked back down to the living room, where she found Ryan sitting on the couch. She sat down next to him and he put his arm around her. She rested her head against his shoulder.

"Do you want me to go?" he asked.

"No, but if you stay, things are only going to heat up again. And I don't think I'll have the strength to stop."

He laughed, but knew she was serious. "Alright, I'll call you tomorrow. Are you sure you'll be alright by yourself?" She nodded as they started walking towards the door. "Call me if you need anything." He kissed her on the lips before walking out the door.

As he got into his car, he heard his cell phone beep. He had missed a call from Ray. He quickly dialed his voicemail: "Ryan, it's Ray. Meet me at the police station as soon as you get this. I think we have a problem."

He drove like a madman to get to the police station downtown. He ran quickly inside as soon as he parked the car, fearing for the worst. Ray was impatiently waiting by the main entrance for him. He quickly led him back to a private room, where Jon's pictures and copies from his journal were spread out. There were also a handful of letters that Ryan had never seen before.

"We might have a serious problem on our hands. I'm going to get right to the point. I don't think Jon worked this alone." He began to explain as he handed Ryan a pile of the strange letters. Both men sat down at the table. "These are copies of letters that were sent to Liz at the YMCA. Each one was mailed in a large envelope addressed to the Aquatics Director. Inside was a smaller one addressed to Liz.

"Thankfully, her boss read them first, and we're lucky she did. This guy mailed out a total of five letters in all, each one about one week apart. All written in the same threatening manner, very similar to some of Jon's journal entries. It was after the second one was sent that I was notified of this situation and the threats made on Liz's life."

Ryan looked very carefully at each letter. Each one had said about the same thing. How disappointed he had been about her and how she would soon feel his wrath. He called her every dirty name in the book, trying to degrade her in every way possible. In one letter, he eve told her how he had planned to rape and torture her if she doesn't obey him.

"Some messed up shit, huh? At first, I thought it was just Jon, trying to take things to the next level, but the profile doesn't match. Jon likes to hide backstage and enjoy the show while fantasizing about her. So I had someone run a fingerprint scan and had a handwriting expert come in. The fingerprints don't match. We know that one is Jon's but the other one isn't on file, meaning that he hasn't committed a crime that we know about."

"So who ever his silent partner is, is still out there and Liz is still in danger. Jon's not smart enough to do this by himself. He's getting help from someone, I just wish I knew from who. Do we have a suspect?" Ryan asked as he set the letters back down, disgusted by what he had read. What would drive a person to write such horrible things?

"No, not yet. We've been interrogating Jon for two hours now and he still won't tell us. I'm thinking that it has to either be someone who she has dated or someone from the YMCA."

Liz turned on the stove to make a pot of tea. She put the kettle of water on and went upstairs to check the girls. They were still sound asleep. She went back down stairs to call her parents to let them know what had happened and

that the girls were safe. Even though it was a little late at night, she figured they had a right to hear it from her first.

Their mom knew Liz wouldn't let anything happen to them, she fully trusted Liz and considered her to be almost like family. She trusted that things would be alright and thanked her for taking such good care of them. She informed Liz that if it was okay with her, that they would not be back until late the next night, but could come home early if she wanted. Liz gratefully refused. She sighed a bit from relief. It is never easy admitted to another person that for once she was unable to control a situation and had needed help. She hung up the phone as the door bell rang.

Ryan and Ray spent the next several intense minutes writing out a list of suspects. Once they had finished, they quickly began crossing off names of those who either didn't fit the profile or eliminated for some other reason. By the end, there was only one name left...

Liz opened the door, surprised to see DJ. Her heart felt light at the disappointment of it not being who she had hoped for.

"Hey I just wanted to see if you were okay." DJ said as Liz let him inside.

"I'm hanging in there. I still feel a little shaky." Liz and DJ walked into the kitchen. "Do you want some tea? I was going to make chicken soup if you're hungry."

DJ nodded as Liz got out two cups. She went to the refrigerator and got out some chicken, celery, and some noodles. She put a big pot of water on the stove and took off the tea kettle. She began cutting up chunks of chicken as DJ poured the tea. He watched her intensely as she threw the chicken into the pot and began to cut up some celery. She dropped everything into the pot and put on the lid on. She turned the stove down to low and then motioned for DJ to follow her into the living room.

"What a crazy day." She said with a nervous laugh as she took a seat on the far side of the couch with DJ on the opposite.

"Yeah. That was pretty crazy. I can't believe Jon could do something like that. I knew he liked you and all, but I had no idea he would do something like this." DJ said as he moved closer to her. "But I guess if you love someone enough, you would do just about anything to their her attention."

"There's a big difference between love and obsession. And there are much better ways to get someone's attention."

"Maybe for him, there was no other way to gain your attention. He didn't want just anyone to notice him, he wanted to you and only you to notice him. You have guys falling all over you and most the time you don't even realize it. You have no idea how crazy it can make you to want someone so much and have them not even know that you exist." He replied, raising his voice a little.

Realizing that he wasn't just talking about Jon anymore, Liz tried to silently wish Ryan was still here. "You're right, I don't have any idea. Why don't you explain it to me."

He moved closer to her. "It's not about power, you don't want to control her. You just want to be with her, to love her. To feel her lips against yours and

know that her kisses are only for you." He reached his hand to her face and ran his fingers over her lips. "And it tears you up inside to see her with another guy. To see the way she smiles at him, wishing for just once she would look at you the same." He ran his fingers through her hair. "I would never want anything to hurt you. There's nothing I wouldn't do for you. I'm not a bad guy if you just give me a chance."

"That son of a bitch!" Ryan said as he and Ray drove to Liz's house. "He must have been in on this the whole fucking time. I can't believe that I trusted that asshole."

Ray turned on his sirens and flashing lights after a few minutes of trying to be patient with the slow drives and red lights. Within minutes they were at Liz's house. To avoid suspicion, Ray shut off his lights before reaching Liz's block and parked a few houses down. He told Ryan to take the back entrance as he took the front.

DJ leaned in to kiss Liz, but she turned her head away.

"I'm sorry, DJ, but I think you deserve so much better than me. You deserve someone who feels the same way about you."

Ray burst into the room, his gun pointed at DJ. DJ grabbed Liz and held a knife against her throat. A few seconds later, Ryan entered the room from the back. Ray lowered his gun a little.

"You don't want to do this, DJ. Just let her go."

"I can't do that. I want to make her understand."

"Make her understand what?" Ray asked, lowering his gun to the ground.

"That I only want to be with her, no one else. Fucking bitch, why don't you want to be with me?"

She looked at Ryan, who was standing besides Ray. A tear rolled down her face. She felt her anger start to rise. Enough is enough, she thought to herself. I'm so tired of this!

"Because I don't love you. I never will. I'm sorry if you pictured us together in some sick fantasy. But this is the real world, get over it."

Everyone was a little shocked. DJ loosened his grip just enough so that Liz could break free. He didn't know what to say. He had always pictured Liz as this obedient angel who never raises her voice.

"I'm sorry DJ. But you can't force someone to love you. And you can't scare them into it either."

"This is all your fault!" He lunged towards Ryan.

Ray pushed Ryan to the floor and fired two rounds from his gun, hitting Jon in the chest. Blood poured out as he fell to the floor. For several seconds, he gasped for air and then finally stopped breathing. Ray called for an ambulance to remove the body.

Within minutes, lights were flashing outside as uniformed officers took over what is now a crime scene. Ray was busy directing cops in different directions. Captain Anderson was on the scene to once again question Liz and Ryan while other cops collected evidence and removed DJ's lifeless body.

Ryan didn't leave Liz's side for the rest of the time while the police were

here. Ray was the last leave, making sure that everything was in order.

"Are you okay?" he asked Liz.

"I am now," she said as Ryan held her close.

Ray was getting ready to leave. He turned towards Ryan, "If you two need anything, give me a call. And Ryan, this time don't let her go. I'm getting too old to have to go through this all over again," he said with a laugh as he left.

Ryan softly stroked her hair as he held her close to him, he couldn't imagine his life without her. They fell asleep in each other's arms.

Liz only slept a few hours, just long enough to watch the sun come up. She quietly threw on a pair of shoes and walked down to the beach. She just stood there, listening to the sound of the waves crashing on the shoreline. The dark sky began to fade as the sun started to rise. She was so memorized that she didn't hear Ryan walking up behind her.

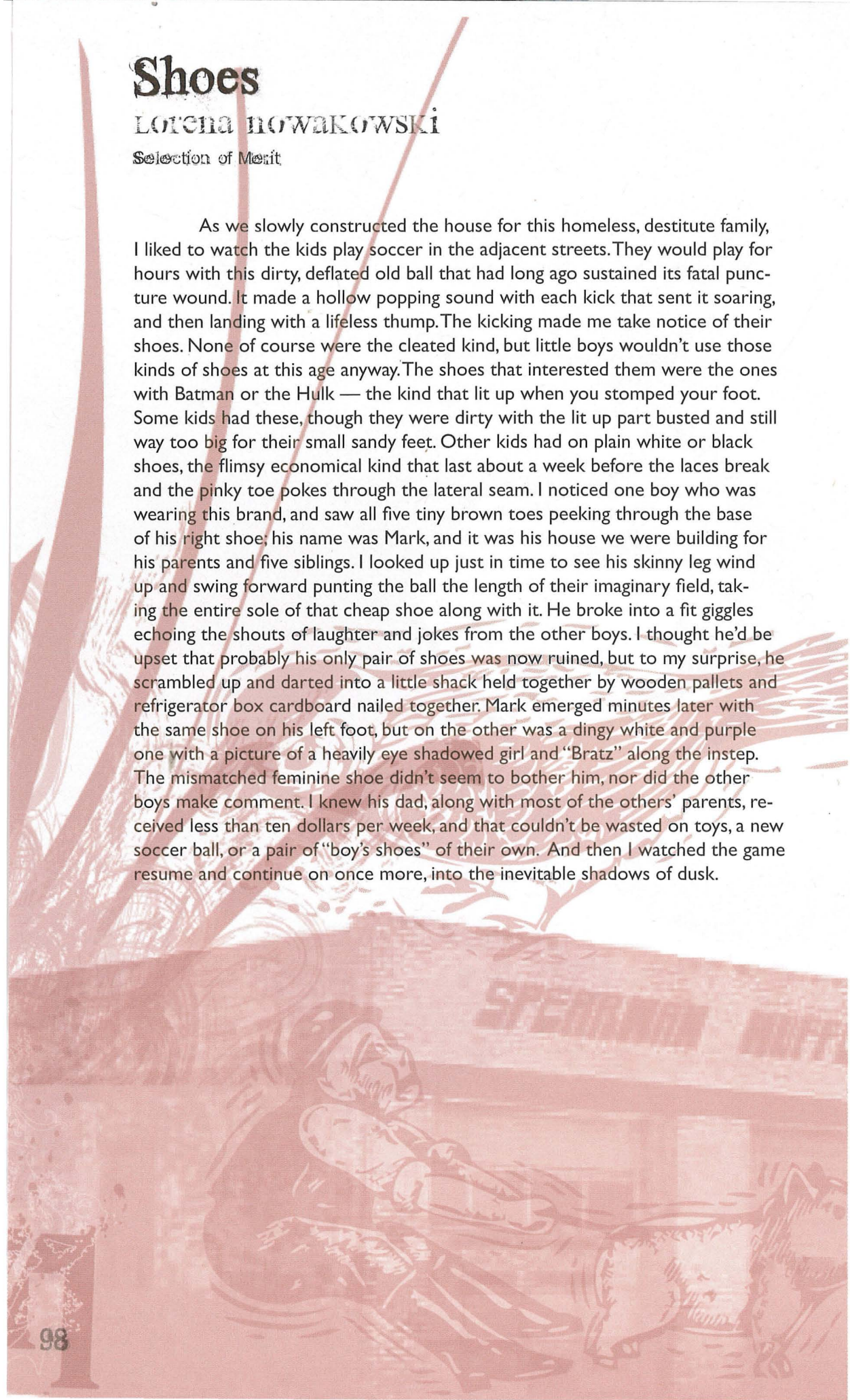
He stood behind her for a moment before wrapping his arms around her, kissing her neck. She smiled as she turned towards him, staring into his blue eyes. She lightly kissed his lips. She was his again. She couldn't remember the last time she felt so safe.

Shoes

Lorena Nowakowski

Selection of Merit

As we slowly constructed the house for this homeless, destitute family, I liked to watch the kids play soccer in the adjacent streets. They would play for hours with this dirty, deflated old ball that had long ago sustained its fatal puncture wound. It made a hollow popping sound with each kick that sent it soaring, and then landing with a lifeless thump. The kicking made me take notice of their shoes. None of course were the cleated kind, but little boys wouldn't use those kinds of shoes at this age anyway. The shoes that interested them were the ones with Batman or the Hulk — the kind that lit up when you stomped your foot. Some kids had these, though they were dirty with the lit up part busted and still way too big for their small sandy feet. Other kids had on plain white or black shoes, the flimsy economical kind that last about a week before the laces break and the pinky toe pokes through the lateral seam. I noticed one boy who was wearing this brand, and saw all five tiny brown toes peeking through the base of his right shoe; his name was Mark, and it was his house we were building for his parents and five siblings. I looked up just in time to see his skinny leg wind up and swing forward punting the ball the length of their imaginary field, taking the entire sole of that cheap shoe along with it. He broke into a fit giggles echoing the shouts of laughter and jokes from the other boys. I thought he'd be upset that probably his only pair of shoes was now ruined, but to my surprise, he scrambled up and darted into a little shack held together by wooden pallets and refrigerator box cardboard nailed together. Mark emerged minutes later with the same shoe on his left foot, but on the other was a dingy white and purple one with a picture of a heavily eye shadowed girl and "Bratz" along the instep. The mismatched feminine shoe didn't seem to bother him, nor did the other boys make comment. I knew his dad, along with most of the others' parents, received less than ten dollars per week, and that couldn't be wasted on toys, a new soccer ball, or a pair of "boy's shoes" of their own. And then I watched the game resume and continue on once more, into the inevitable shadows of dusk.



Apples

Lorena Nowakowski

Selection of Merit

On a plain day:
horizontal strips stack neatly on his knee.
On a cheery day:
delicious coiled ribbons dangle from our lips.
On an arduous day:
red or green hunks litter the ground.
And on a Sunday:
he'll toss the core to the chickens.



Making Eye Contact

Twana Rose Pinskey

Selection of Merit

Parents strive to give their children the best in life. I was no different and worked at exposing my children to as many different things in life, all to give them the best opportunity to become more diverse, responsible, well-rounded people. One of the activities my daughters were offered was dance. Both of my girls adapted to dance, like a fish will to water. One of the classes my youngest daughter took was a class that we attended together; it was a Mother-Daughter Tap Class. It provided a great way to spend time with her, and allowed me some needed exercise as well.

One day, the instructor planned a field trip for our dance studio. The students were to attend a dance event in Detroit, at Hart Plaza. Some of our students were to perform in the "National Tap Dance Day" event. Tap Legend, Lloyd Storey would be present. How exciting! My daughter and I would get to see one of the great legends in the dance world.

There were four groups that attended from our dance studio, including one of our Mother-Daughter Tap Classes. We were a relatively new studio and, participating in this dance event would give us some much needed exposure. The ride downtown lasted close to two hours. After parking our cars, the students and parents walked over to Hart Plaza. The plaza in Detroit is an outdoor venue, with roman style, arena seating. There was row after row of cement slab benches, all formed in a C-shape, facing the performance stage. We entered the arena area, and sought our seats. We were greeted visually by a sea of sequined, colorful costume clad dancers, all clicking around in tap shoes. My daughter was wide-eyed in amazement, as she stood watching, taking in all the different forms of dance costumes. There were at least a couple of hundred people watching the dancing, and oh what a variety of dancers we saw! One group in particular, was a group of tap dancers that were wearing ballet pointe/toe shoes, with the taps attached to the toes of the pointe shoes! This group was incredible to watch. After the students from our studio performed, our mother-daughter tap class was acknowledged on stage by the Master of Ceremonies as being the only mother-daughter group in attendance. The master of ceremonies pointed out that dance was a form of expression that people of all ages could enjoy.

After watching the show, I decided to take my daughter around town to see some sights she wouldn't be able to see, living in a small community. I took her for a ride on the People Mover, after which we walked over to Cobo Hall to look around. The walk we took, and the things she saw that day, provided her with a glimpse into how some people are forced to live their lives. On one street corner was a lady pushing a two-wheeled shopping cart, with what appeared to be all of her worldly belongings. The cart contained a paper sack filled with empty plastic bags, empty pop cans, beer bottles, shoes, what looked to be a coat, and a blanket. As we continued walking, on more than one street corner were men with little, brown paper bags wrapped around what looked like bottles. A thought entered my mind: how do I explain any of this to an eight year old? Becoming uncomfortable, I decided to head back to the plaza, and get something to eat.

Once back at the plaza, there were many street vendors, selling a variety

of foods for our meal selection. This variety of ethnic foods, assaulted our senses. There were sausages grilling with sautéed onions, and peppers that filled the entire plaza with a tempting aroma. Farther down, there were elephant ears, slathered in butter, and cinnamon sugar. My mouth watered as I walked pass the vinegar fries, they looked so good. We made our selections, and sought out a spot on one of the cement, benches to sit and eat our meal.

We were just sitting there eating, and people watching, when I turned to see behind us, a man. He was dressed in a long, tapered, brown, trench coat styled jacket. This was unusual to see in the middle of summer. He was wearing shoes, with a hole visibly worn through the sole of his right foot. He had on a layer of shirts, all different colors, none of which were appropriate for the season. I realized he was probably wearing everything he owned on his person. I observed that as old and tattered as his clothes were that they were clean. This man did his best to take pride in and care of what he had. What caught my eye, really got my attention, was the pride, the way in which he carried himself. As down-trodden as he looked, he still held his head high and had a sparkle in his eye, as he went from trash bin to trash bin in search of perhaps a meal, or some unseen treasure.

He headed our way, lying down on a bench a few feet behind us. I sat studying him as he slept. His hair was slightly peppered white and showed just a hint of gray in his whiskers. He had long, slender fingers. Had he once played the piano? His fingers reminded me of those a pianist would have. As I looked at him even more closely, I realized how truly thin he was. He slept on, unaware I was studying him. In my mind, I began to question the events that led him to this point in life. Did he have a hard life? What had happened to him to end up living on the streets this way? Where was his family, did he have children, or a wife? My little girl was totally obliviously to this man and for that, I was grateful. I had no idea how to explain to her why or what he was doing there. How do you invade the innocence of a little girl's childhood with the harsh realities of life?

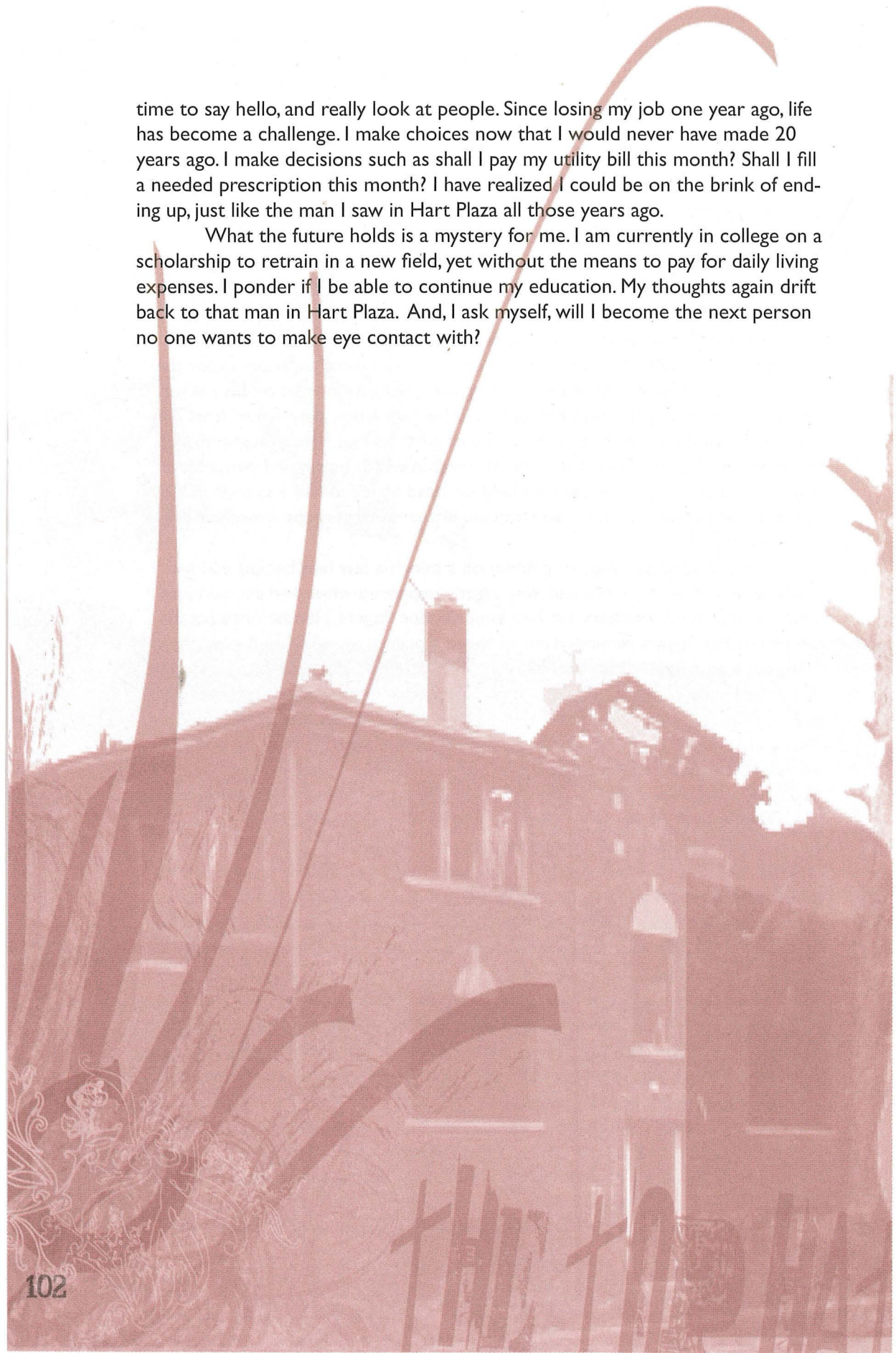
I was snapped out my deep thoughts when my little girl tugged on my arm. We stood up and headed off to explore something that had caught her attention. I walked away from the man without even making eye contact. I hadn't even looked back to see if he still slept. Later that night, after my daughter was home, tucked safely into her bed, my thoughts returned to the man I had seen earlier at Hart Plaza. I was ashamed I hadn't approached him to talk to him. I had looked at him, but not really looked at the person, making eye contact, acknowledging a fellow human being. I felt guilty for not having at least offered to buy him a sandwich. I thought it could so easily have been me in his situation. How would I feel if no one ever took the time to make eye contact with me, or acknowledge me as a human being?

I was so affected by what I did not do that day. I vowed to learn from it. I promised myself that I would never again forget to take the time to make eye contact and say hello to someone. You never know when it could be you in their shoes.

Almost twenty years later, I have never forgotten my vow to take the

time to say hello, and really look at people. Since losing my job one year ago, life has become a challenge. I make choices now that I would never have made 20 years ago. I make decisions such as shall I pay my utility bill this month? Shall I fill a needed prescription this month? I have realized I could be on the brink of ending up, just like the man I saw in Hart Plaza all those years ago.

What the future holds is a mystery for me. I am currently in college on a scholarship to retrain in a new field, yet without the means to pay for daily living expenses. I ponder if I be able to continue my education. My thoughts again drift back to that man in Hart Plaza. And, I ask myself, will I become the next person no one wants to make eye contact with?



Ophelia

THEODORE PARKHURST

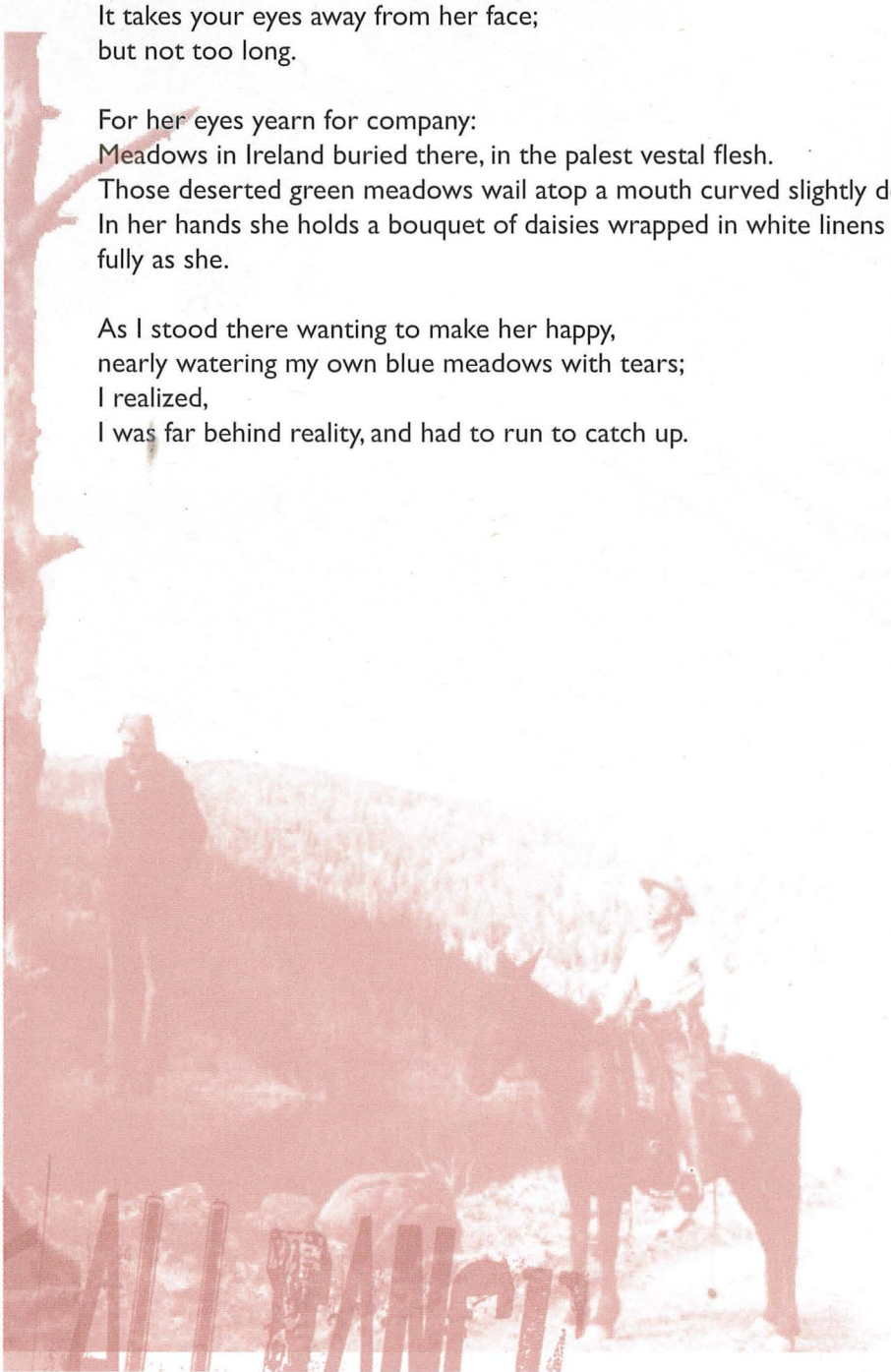
Selection of Merit

We were walking through the halls
of the Toledo Museum of Art.
Everybody and I passed by the Pollacks and the Warhols,
and I first met her there.
In hall numbered twenty six, she and I, alone.

Her hair bends and twists
around itself like thick wisps of clouds just before
a rare and lovely orange sunset.
The dress she wears clings down the completeness of her body.
It takes your eyes away from her face;
but not too long.

For her eyes yearn for company:
Meadows in Ireland buried there, in the palest vestal flesh.
Those deserted green meadows wail atop a mouth curved slightly down.
In her hands she holds a bouquet of daisies wrapped in white linens as beautifully as she.

As I stood there wanting to make her happy,
nearly watering my own blue meadows with tears;
I realized,
I was far behind reality, and had to run to catch up.



Seven Embers

DARYL LATTEW

Selection of Merit

Seven Embers
light the sky
search above me
Swimming dry
candelabra
brightly lit
seven embers
endless pit
rushing out
caving in
seven embers
divine sin
don't know where
to begin
seven embers
laughing grin
high above me
deep down low
seven embers
melting snow
shaking silence
drowning light
seven embers
embrace the night
seven embers
in the sky
alight November
the living die.

When the Sky Breaks

DARYL FARROW
Selection of Merit

When the sky breaks its shards upon the land,
The gilded wheat bends to it, held like a half-clasped rag.
The silver quivers of water pour like a rushing river.
The sodden soil puddles up in sheets of sheen
Reflecting in dingy gray the sky, awash in ever expanding ripples.
Now wave after wave abolishes the once silent dirt,
Dissolving into murky pools until all that is left are islands of wild grass
Clumped together, holding on desperately in a sea of rippling circles
Cascading in accord to some heavenly cadence
That cannot be known by man.

I Am

STACY SCHLANDRAFF

Selection of Merit

I am Hell running.
Presently past tense
I bathe in pink water
Full of betas.
Sensibly murderess,
I cannonball band aid
Into a silent echo.
As my gauntlet cuts,
Fast and smooth,
I scream through my sunburn.

I am cheesy porn music
In an elevator
Swimming with politicians.
I walk backward, minus the meat,
I ride the statistics
On a silver plated
Medieval blade from Milwaukee Japan.
I eat life tablespoon manners.

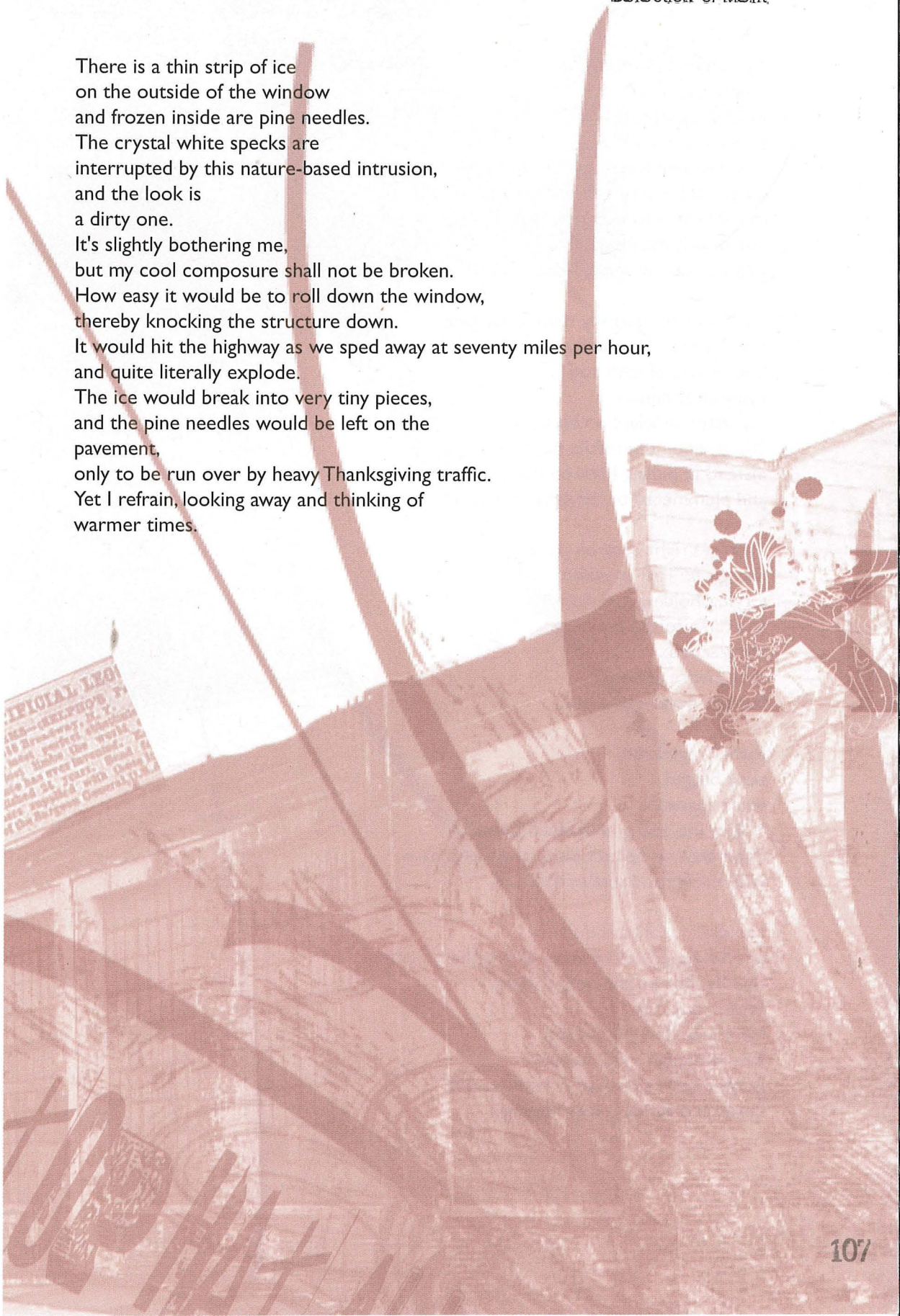


Deception Has an Audience

amanda smith

Selection of Merit

There is a thin strip of ice
on the outside of the window
and frozen inside are pine needles.
The crystal white specks are
interrupted by this nature-based intrusion,
and the look is
a dirty one.
It's slightly bothering me,
but my cool composure shall not be broken.
How easy it would be to roll down the window,
thereby knocking the structure down.
It would hit the highway as we sped away at seventy miles per hour,
and quite literally explode.
The ice would break into very tiny pieces,
and the pine needles would be left on the
pavement,
only to be run over by heavy Thanksgiving traffic.
Yet I refrain, looking away and thinking of
warmer times.



Equus

Darsci Sweet

Selection of Merit

As I carried the oiled
saddle and bridle
from the garage
to the pony pen,
then swished the dry,
dusty oats in a rusted coffee can
to catch an unwilling ride---
hot, prickly excitement
galloped up my spine.

But Scout had already thundered away,
mane, and tail streaming,
hoof hunks of dark sod
flying after him---
My sister shocked on his back.
She grabbed the saddle horn
instead of pulling back on the reins
and plummeted to the grazed ground.

"You get right back on after
falling off," Father yelled.
Crying, holding her stomach,
she ran into the house.
He pleaded,
then swore at her.
but she never came out.

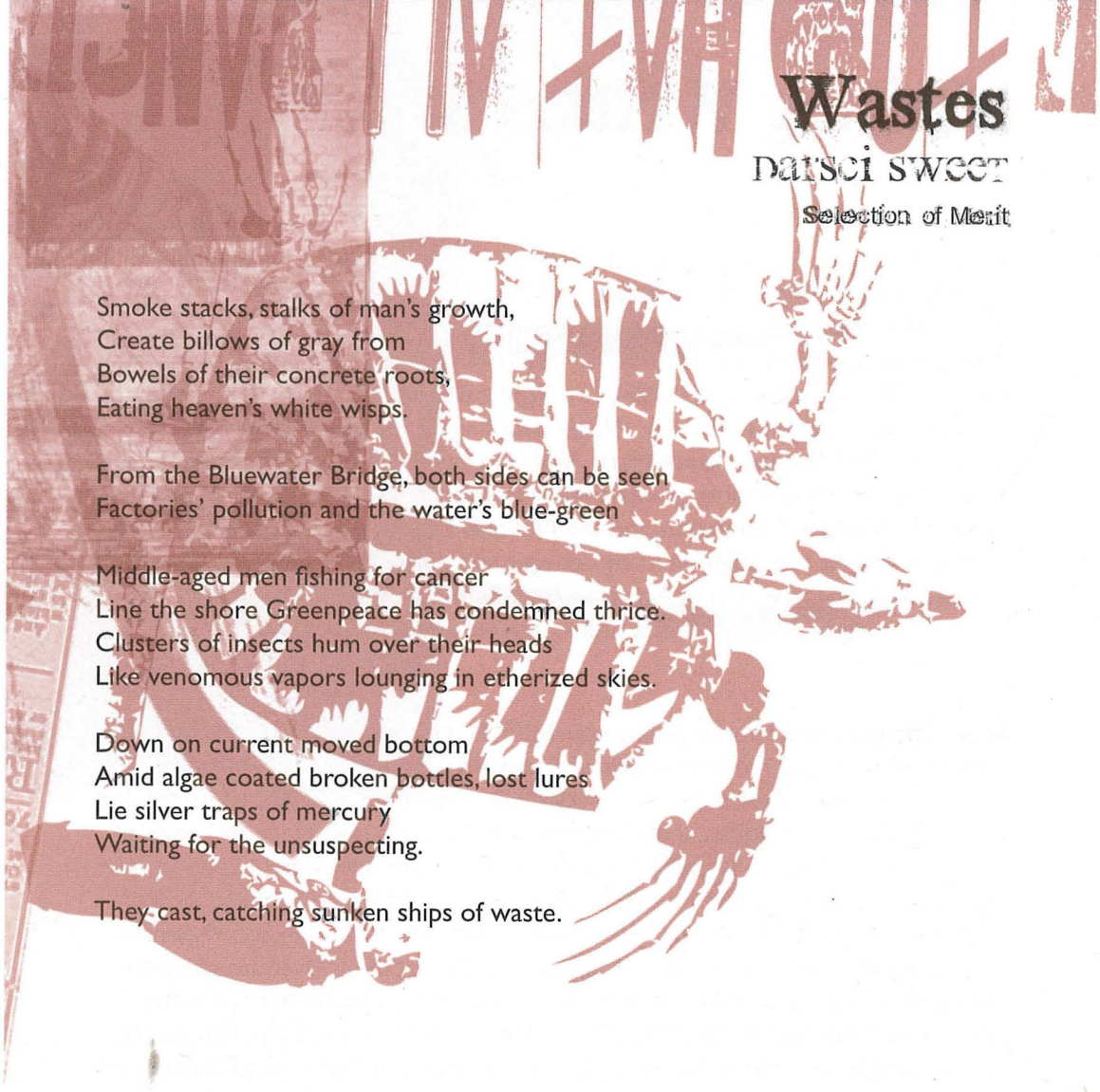
Father raged red,
neck bulged,
voice roared,
"Obey me, you god damned beast,"
as he beat on Scout's black and white back
with his fist and sinewy forearm.

He lifted me into the saddle
and whopped with a piece of weathered gray
two by four on the pony's rump.
Scout reared back,
front feet climbing the sky,
me---trapped on horseback,
leather reins clenched in white hands,
knees and Scout's sides hugging.

Wastes

Daisci Sweet

Selection of Merit



Smoke stacks, stalks of man's growth,
Create billows of gray from
Bowels of their concrete roots,
Eating heaven's white wisps.

From the Bluewater Bridge, both sides can be seen
Factories' pollution and the water's blue-green

Middle-aged men fishing for cancer
Line the shore Greenpeace has condemned thrice.
Clusters of insects hum over their heads
Like venomous vapors lounging in etherized skies.

Down on current moved bottom
Amid algae coated broken bottles, lost lures
Lie silver traps of mercury
Waiting for the unsuspecting.

They cast, catching sunken ships of waste.

Visiting Writers and Judges

Franz Wright: Franz Wright is the author of 13 collections of poetry; his most recent, *Walking to Martha's Vineyard* (Knopf 2003) was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. His newest collection, *God's Silence*, will be published by Knopf in January 2006. Wright's other books include *The Beforelife* (2001), *Ill Lit: New and Selected Poems* (1998), *Rorschach Test* (1995), *The Night World and the Word Night* (1993), and *Midnight Postscript* (1993). Mr. Wright also has translated poems by René Char, Erica Pedretti, and Rainer Maria Rilke. He has received the PEN/Voelcker Award for Poetry, as well as grants and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Whiting Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Born in Vienna, Wright has taught in many colleges and universities, including Emerson College and the University of Arkansas. He also has worked in a mental health clinic in Lexington, Massachusetts, and as a volunteer at the Center for Grieving Children.

Mike Magnuson: Working-class novelist Mike Magnuson is the author of *The Right Man for the Job, The Fire Gospels*, and *Lummox: The Evolution of a Man*. His novels have been described as intense, meticulous, disturbing, hilarious, and as being singularly Wisconsin-gothic and pretty much kickass. His miscellaneous writing has appeared in *Esquire, Writer's Digest, Fiction Writer*, the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, and other publications, and he recently has gone into the studio and recorded a Spoken Word CD titled *Loud!* He was born in 1963 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was raised in Menomonee Falls, and spent a good deal of his twenties going to college and hanging around in taverns and working in a plastics factory in the west-central Wisconsin city of Eau Claire. He also has lived in Ohio, Minnesota, Florida, and Illinois, where he currently lives. He earns his daily bread teaching in the Creative Writing Program at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

Michael Perry: Michael Perry is a humorist and author of the best-selling memoir *Population 485: Meeting Your Neighbors One Siren at a Time*, and the essay collection *Off Main Street.* Perry has written for *Esquire, The New York Times Magazine, Outside, Backpacker, Orion* and Salon.com, and is a contributing editor to *Men's Health*. His essays have been heard on NPR's *All Things Considered* and he has performed and produced two live audience recordings (*I Got It From the Cows* and *Never Stand Behind a Sneezing Cow*). Perry lives in rural Wisconsin, where he remains active as a volunteer firefighter and emergency medical responder.

Let Us Eat Cake!

JOE ANN BRIGGETT
Alumni Author

"*Gramma, what will you do on your next 50th birthday?*" my seven year old grandson asked. Why I think I will sit right here with you in my favorite rocking chair and eat ice cream for breakfast with a fork.

I will wear a coffee can on my head to keep my memory from falling out. And you will hold my teeth for me in your pocket when it is my turn to play kick the can so they do not fall out while I am running.

I will say "come here little boy and give me some candy and don't even try to make me eat any broccoli." I will sing to the moon and sit all day long in the sun without any sunscreen.

Because I am the birthday goddess I will wear my best tiara and command all of my closest friends and family both living and dead (whose names I can still remember) to come and celebrate.

Everyone who attends will wear their Depends and eat our favorite foods with our fingers. We will sip Gin Fizzes from peanut butter jars so we don't have to wash any dishes and sing beer drinking songs very loud and off-key.

Your father (who has never had a sense of humor) will scowl at us and make shushing noises. I will wink at our guests and tell them that we have been asked to turn the noise up.

You will bring me bubbles for my bath and rainbow colored ribbons for my hair. And I will hold you on my lap and rock you and tell you stories about my last 50th birthday. And how we laughed.

We All Settled Down for a Long Winter's Nap

JOE ANN BURGETT
Alumni Author

With my apologies to Mr. Shakespeare
Wrapped in thermal underwear and sweats, we settle in for a long, long rest.
We nestle before a glowing fire,
and watch the mindless TV shows that you love best.
Remote in hand, slowly your head nods–and you expire,
there near the dying embers–marshmallows and hot chocolate lie,
Red licorice, Malted Milk Balls and Pop Corn on the floor
What a lovely couple–you and I!
I cannot recall when I loved you more.

How can we revive that burning heat
that consumed us once? I long for you to lust for me once more,
wrap me in rose petals, kiss my feet…
Instead I watch and wait while you sweat before the fire, and snore!

Suddenly, silently, a foul odor fills the air, the dog and you both look my way
"Got any ice cream?" you turn to me and ask. "Hey could you run to the store?"



Okay, then...

Heather Herrmann-Brennan
Alumni Author

Since you've shredded my poems
and my pictures too, I assume—
maybe I should do the same:
those few scribbled lines on napkins I've kept,
books meant for dream-mares,
the photo of our embrace: a long April ago.

But what do you suggest I do with my mind?
A car-crash-cranium where all I am left with
is a tire in each gyri,
gear-shaft in sulcus,
medulla cluttered with your hood ornament,
your bumper sticker gumming and numbing
every sensory nerve ending?

At night, my head aches.

Your hands,
your smell,
your blue blue blue blue eyes,
that May, that October,
that picnic on the lawn,
that dusty diner,
cliché coffee house,
broken-down bar,
truck, that truck, your truck
smashed and dashed and crashed
and now lodging in the junkyard of my mind.

This scrap-salvage world
I live in without you,
without so much
as one, shredded up, poem.

Sick Monday

Heather Herrmann-Brennan
Alumni Author

but for real this time:
Kleenex-crumb trail through the house,
my night stand a make-shift nursing home,
red and orange pills,
once a day and every night,
a bottle of thick sleep elixir,
half-empty and sticky.

My throat is sandpaper meets concrete,
a salt-sliced wound squeezed through with lemon.
My nose leaks snail-trail-tears,
my forehead is fire and my flesh: frozen through.
And you call in, too.

On this Monday afternoon
rain splats gray on the windows
and the cat curls, sleeping around the dog.

You light candles, put on Miles Davis,
pour me whiskey straight in a
Japanese-calligraphied tea-cup.

Your hands: two ships,
the envy of wood carvers
and ache of every woman,
run along my skin in smooth strokes.
You slick Vicks over my sore spots,
your mouth sea-sponges kisses
across my cheeks and forehead,
you tuck me in and hush me like a child.

Let me be born in you—
my beautiful germ—
a place to lodge and grow.
Let me leave bread-crumb trails of antigens
through your veins.
You: my make-shift home,
my red and orange love: once a day and every night.

Us half-melded as one,
the bottle gone now,
but still sticky-sweet.

Isomer Girl

Heather Herrmann-Brennan

Alumni Author

If form equals function
then what does it mean
when you sit like that,
away from me,
hands rubbing temples,
massaging your knees, your body?

I have seen you folded and wet
on the edges.
I have seen the sun split your whiskers
into colors not in your beard.
I have seen you at night, asleep,
when you think I do not watch.

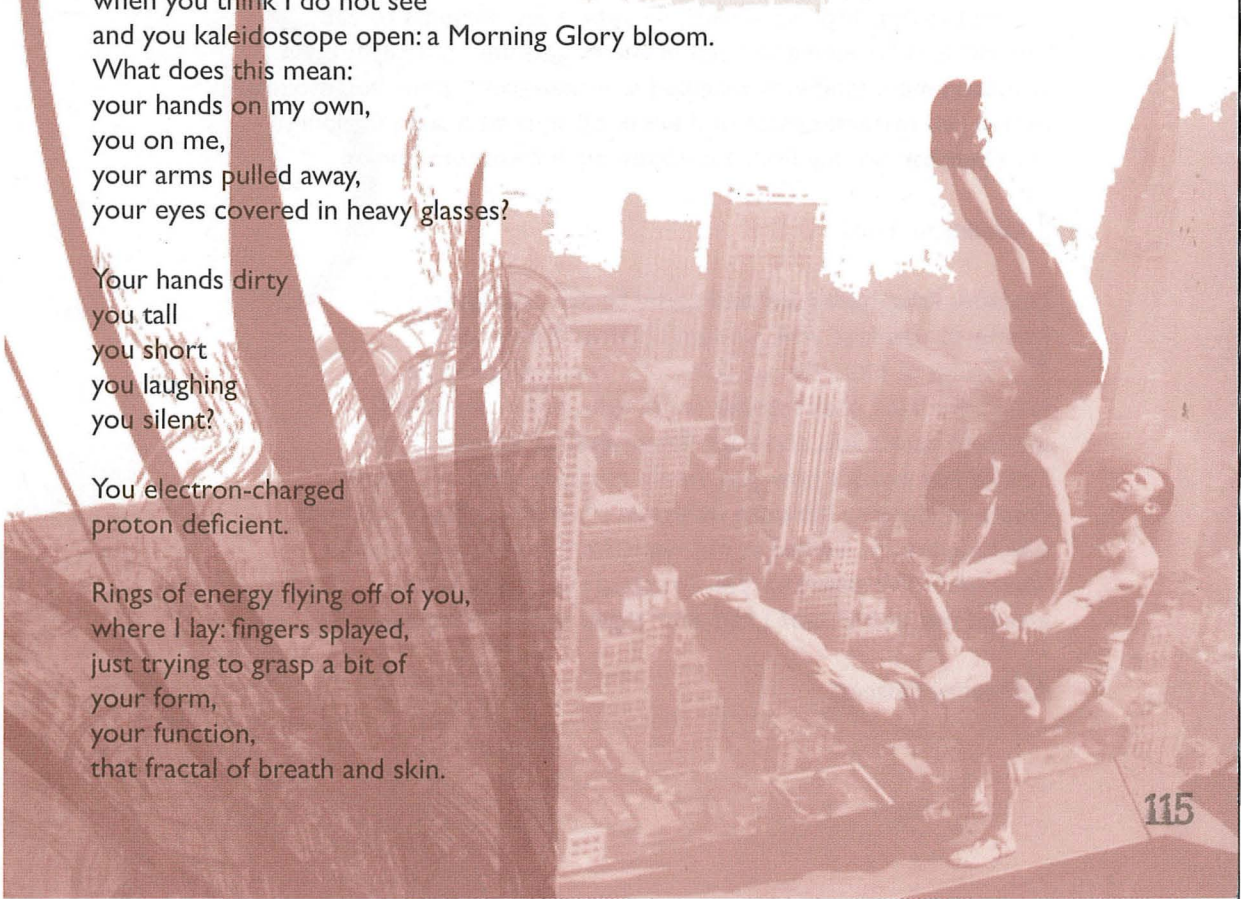
If form equals function
then how can I explain
the curve of your thumb,
or the clean-ness of your hands,
or the exact way you tilt your head
to make your point?

You are tall and solid: a Live Oak.
You are sharp-tempered and dark: Spiny Nettle.
Your eyes let in the light of the sky
when you think I do not see
and you kaleidoscope open: a Morning Glory bloom.
What does this mean:
your hands on my own,
you on me,
your arms pulled away,
your eyes covered in heavy glasses?

Your hands dirty
you tall
you short
you laughing
you silent?

You electron-charged
proton deficient.

Rings of energy flying off of you,
where I lay: fingers splayed,
just trying to grasp a bit of
your form,
your function,
that fractal of breath and skin.



The Last Installment

STEPHEN STOBBE
Alumni Author

1. *Leaving*

The voice on the other end of the phone said,
"He's gone," which meant my father had died,
not from the cancer the rest of us had come to fear,
but struck down hard and suddenly, instead,
by a heart that ultimately must fail.
As one lost winter day crossed into the next,
I packed a few belongings in the truck,
left my wife and sons behind for now, and drove
the hundred miles toward what was once my home.
Through the windshield I could see a perfect
half-moon, equally divided between darkness and light,
listening to David Gray's Slow Motion, driving through
the intermittent tears, montage of memories projected
before me, calling forth a reconstructed past.

2. *Deer Hunting*

We are sitting, before dawn, on the front seat of our 1963
Ford Galaxie 500: peacock blue, with a plaid, cloth interior.
I am just a boy, and it is rare to have you to myself like this.
We came up here to go deer hunting on some property
near your grandfather's farm.
Before heading into the woods, we took a few minutes to eat.
The car is still running to keep us warm, and the dome light is on.
You hand me a sandwich wrapped in waxed paper, pour hot chocolate
from a red metal thermos, and break off squares from a Cadbury
Hazelnut bar, not my first, but maybe my holiest communion.

3. *Coming to Terms*

Decades later, having left and come back a prodigal son,
I came to you first with a poem I had written, entitled
The Songs of Men. We sat down at a round black table
in straight back chairs, under a dim light, and I recounted
my truth about you, and your father, and his father, and me.
I could not predict how you would react, or what this might
create or destroy between us. When I had finished, you drew in
one long breath, looked at me, waited a moment, and called it
"beautiful." We stood up, you wrapped your large arms
around me, and all that I had ever raged against, fell away.

4. *Shooting Lessons*

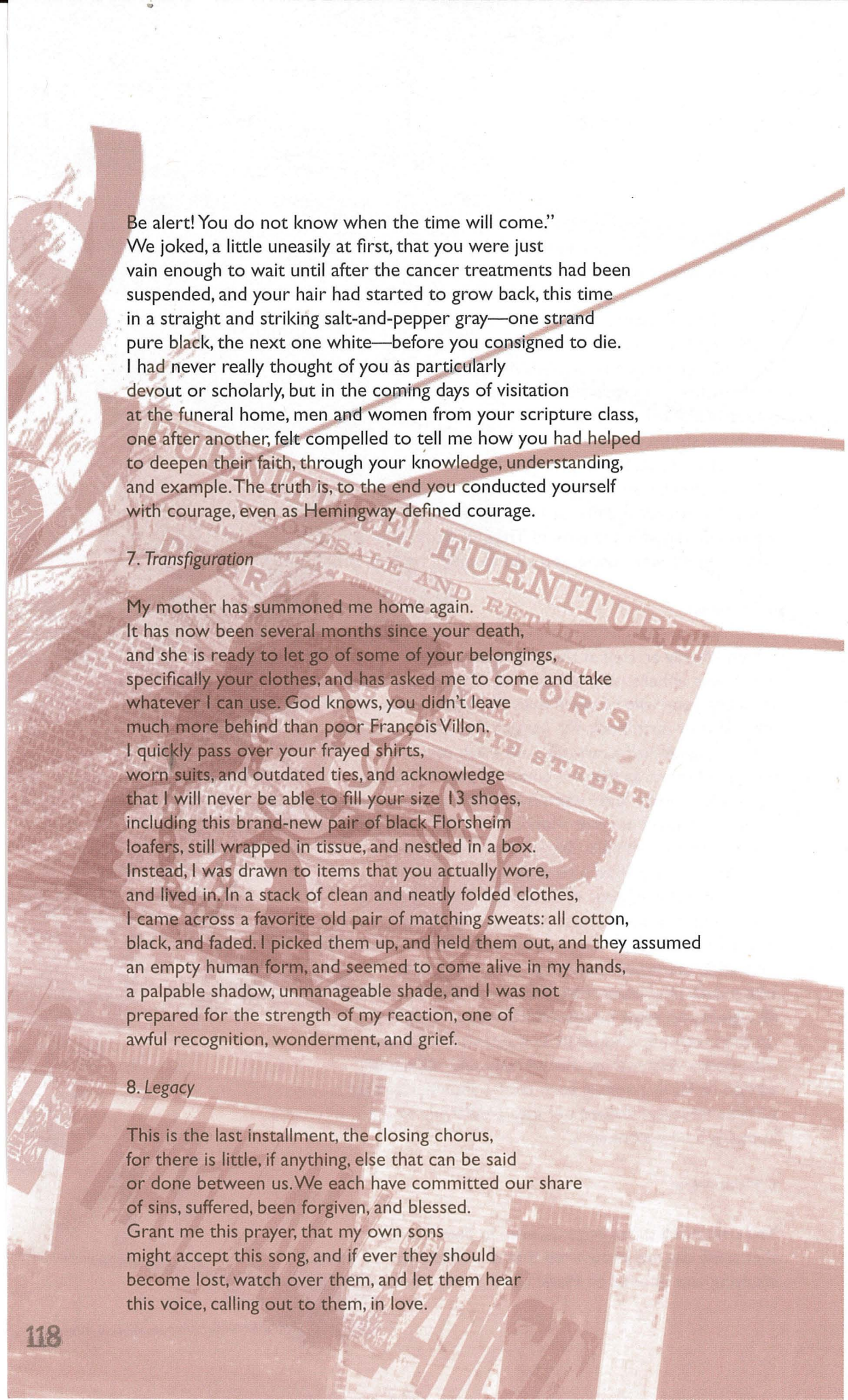
After you were diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer,
and before you started chemotherapy, I asked if you would
teach my boys (only 8 and 9) to shoot. You readily agreed.
We laid down mats on the parched summer grass, and carried out
an old .22 caliber Mossberg bolt-action rifle, with iron sights.
It was hot, and you were short of breath, and easily fatigued.
Still, you knelt down slowly between Joseph and David,
spoke softly, and gently shifted each of them into a proper
prone position. I stood back, stricken with awe, watching you
teach my sons a skill that you had once taught me.
The lessons took. Sighting in, they each placed their first four shots
into the circular lid of a coffee can. Soon, they were shattering
clay pigeons, perched precariously on the ends of wooden stakes
we had driven into the ground. They hit damn near every target,
and when we were done, you said to me, "I had the time of my life!"

5. *Transition*

When I finally arrived at the emergency room,
which was unbelievably quiet, most of your immediate family,
including your wife of more than fifty years, were still gathered
around your dead body. We hugged one another, cried,
talked, laughed half-heartedly, told a few stories,
and made sense, as best we could, of your mortality.
They left, and you and I were truly alone one last time.
I placed my hand on your motionless chest, caressed
your rugged and familiar face, gently pushed back
an eyelid with my thumb to glimpse that piercing
steel blue color of your eyes. I grasped your yielding
hand in mine, leaned across your hulking corpse,
but already could no longer locate that warm, reassuring
masculine scent I used to nuzzle into as a child.
Like a dark new moon that shows no light, you lacked
all capacity to react or respond. Even so, I kissed you
on the forehead, whispered as if you could still hear me,
only slowly released my mortal hold, and reluctantly
turned to leave. Looking back over a shoulder, at that
terrible tableau, I walked out into a different world,
knowing a new aloneness.

6. *Postmortem*

You continued to surprise us, even in death. Later
that same day, we discovered that the bible you had been
studying was opened to Mark 13:33, which warned, "Be watchful!



Be alert! You do not know when the time will come."
We joked, a little uneasily at first, that you were just
vain enough to wait until after the cancer treatments had been
suspended, and your hair had started to grow back, this time
in a straight and striking salt-and-pepper gray—one strand
pure black, the next one white—before you consigned to die.
I had never really thought of you as particularly
devout or scholarly, but in the coming days of visitation
at the funeral home, men and women from your scripture class,
one after another, felt compelled to tell me how you had helped
to deepen their faith, through your knowledge, understanding,
and example. The truth is, to the end you conducted yourself
with courage, even as Hemingway defined courage.

7. *Transfiguration*

My mother has summoned me home again.
It has now been several months since your death,
and she is ready to let go of some of your belongings,
specifically your clothes, and has asked me to come and take
whatever I can use. God knows, you didn't leave
much more behind than poor François Villon.
I quickly pass over your frayed shirts,
worn suits, and outdated ties, and acknowledge
that I will never be able to fill your size 13 shoes,
including this brand-new pair of black Florsheim
loafers, still wrapped in tissue, and nestled in a box.
Instead, I was drawn to items that you actually wore,
and lived in. In a stack of clean and neatly folded clothes,
I came across a favorite old pair of matching sweats: all cotton,
black, and faded. I picked them up, and held them out, and they assumed
an empty human form, and seemed to come alive in my hands,
a palpable shadow, unmanageable shade, and I was not
prepared for the strength of my reaction, one of
awful recognition, wonderment, and grief.

8. *Legacy*

This is the last installment, the closing chorus,
for there is little, if anything, else that can be said
or done between us. We each have committed our share
of sins, suffered, been forgiven, and blessed.
Grant me this prayer, that my own sons
might accept this song, and if ever they should
become lost, watch over them, and let them hear
this voice, calling out to them, in love.

Finding the Woman with the Axe in Her Purse

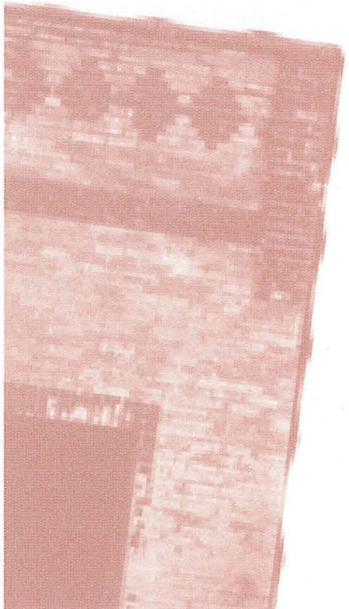
Grace Vermeer
Alumni Author

Well, someone had to kill the chickens
squawking behind the chicken wire.
Wring their necks?
Chop off their heads.

Two nails, a stump, my mother
swung the axe—Whack!
They wobbled, flapped about the yard.
How long could I flap without my head?

Dear reader, I confess an odd fondness
to repeat the familiar.
When I mingle in a room filled with 200 people,
I always find the woman with the axe in her purse.

I smile, stretch my neck—
hardly notice the bloody mess.
I flap for days—yes, I have a vague sense
that something is missing,
but I can't say what.



The Snow Crocus

Grace Vermeer
Alumni Author

The winter world of loss and grief died slow.
It seemed like years. I breathed small breaths; I slept
in cold dark earth, a stone beneath the snow.

Had I chosen this, my blindness? But no
voice spoke, nothing answered, nothing except
the winter world, loss and grief. I died slow,

smelled decay in naked graves, groped below
the rotten shrouds. Who was I now? I wept
in cold dark earth. A stone beneath the snow,

I slept grief's sleep while a purple shadow
began to stir inside my dreams and crept
out of that winter world. My grief died slow,

ice thawed in my veins, green began to flow.
I struggled up through sodden leaves and left
the cold dark earth—A stone beneath the snow?

No! My body unfolds, dripping with snow.
Green songs stream through my throat. Shall I forget
the winter world, the loss? Grief dies so slow
in cold dark earth, a stone beneath the snow.

Moving West

Grace Vermeer
Alumni Author

My brother, do you remember
the sun as it rose,
massive and golden in its red sky,
the morning we climbed into the Buick
and headed west toward Montana?

We were God's favorite pilgrims,
leaving that coal mining town in Ohio,
pulling a trailer tied down with a canvas,
and we believed
our father's hunger was over, almost.

We rolled down the windows,
grinned behind sunglasses,
you drummed on the dashboard,
I clapped with The Blind Boys—
This may be the last time,
This may be the last time, children!

In Havre, we laughed at the tumbleweeds
caught in the wind,
drifting across the dry thirsty land.
We slept along roadsides,
ate our mother's canned peaches—
This was Big Sky Country!

The Bitterroot Mountains
shimmered on the horizon,
we could already taste
the sweet manna of the next place,
and we believed
our father's hunger was over, almost.

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Patterns

5th Edition

Patterns

50th Edition

Volume 1

A Retrospective: 1959–2008

St. Clair County Community College
Port Huron, Michigan

January 2008

Frontispiece

First, Take One Red Ripe Tomato

Blanche Redman

Today I found a vine with one red ripe tomato in the sun
like when I stopped to wonder at the wild white
morning glory
when I was only nine and walking in the weeds
and the sun sneaked through and pinched me on the arm.
And God spoke to me then (I think He did) and said:
Always remain a kid.
And I did and got spanked all my life from then to now.
Today I drank my red tomato in the sun,
mine not grand like Keats' nectar or Hopkins'
dappled-down-dilly,
but going where it went—sweet and red and warm.
Today I winked at God, and He winked back at me.
I think He did.

(reprinted from The Dekaib Literary Arts Journal, 1976,
first published in the Portland Oregonian)

Preface

In 1959, the very first issue of the magazine you have in your hands began with these simple words:

> The Green Mask Dramatics Society of the Port Huron Junior College presents the award winners in the first Creative Writing Contest.

Our first edition was produced on a manual typewriter, photocopied, hand-punched with holes, and bound with yarn between covers of green construction paper—a humble beginning. Nearly a half-century later, we are proud to release this first part of a two-volume golden anniversary edition of *Patterns* magazine. We begin our celebration of *Patterns*' 50th edition with a look back over 49 years of continuous publication. Here we've collected and reprinted a single award-winning poem, story or essay from each issue, from the original through last year's 49th edition. In addition to these written works, we also present reproductions of each year's first-place winning student artworks that began appearing in this magazine in the second edition (1960).

It was a simple matter to identify the artworks to be featured in this volume: the first-place awards for visual art assigned by past judges did the work of selection for us. A word or two needs to be said, however, about how the written works were selected, given that up to four genres of writing (poetry, fiction, personal essay, and critical essay) were included in past issues, garnering awards in their proper categories. How, then, to choose the pieces to be singled out in this edition? Economy, sad to say, in the form of space constraints necessarily played a part, and so only shorter works could be reprinted in these pages. Beyond that restriction, the editors attempted to include works that would illustrate the range of genres, styles, and visions that have characterized *Patterns* through the decades. You will find within these covers works that mark the social and artistic currents of their day, yet some of our staff have also remarked at how surprisingly contemporary much of the writing and artwork still seems even now in the twenty-first century.

Compiling this retrospective volume has been something of an experience in time travel. To explain what that means I'll break out of the customary editorial "we" to share what it has been like to delve into five decades of writing, artwork, and the editorial contributions of the *Patterns* staff over the years. Leafing through the early editions of *Patterns* felt a bit like archaeology: unearthing *in memorium* tributes to "Port Huron Junior College" faculty whose names I'd never heard, psychedelic images from the Sixties, poetry from young students who must today be in their seventies. As, issue by issue, the years shuffled by, the experience began to feel less like ancient history as I encountered in the lists of *Patterns* staff and judges the familiar names of recently retired faculty, or those, like Tom Obee, still teaching after more than three decades. At about the halfway point, with the issues of the late 1970's and early 1980's, flashes of recognition hit me as the names of

friends from my own student days at SC4 jumped out at me from the tables of contents. As I finally turned to the issues of the 1990's and the new millennium, another flash of recognition struck me as I began to read over the works of my own students, and to finally reach the most recent volumes which I had edited myself. As a whole, the task of compiling these contents felt like a trip through five decades in a virtual time machine. Whether you're struck by its reflections on the past or by the sometimes surprisingly contemporary-seeming artistic visions compiled here, we invite you to explore in these pages our tribute to some of the finest artistic expression to come out of St. Clair County Community College.

— Clifford Johnson

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Patterns and How It Grew

Blanche Redman

In 1958 where in the world did I get the idea of a literary journal for students of the college? Teaching English and German classes, I had long since set aside any writing on my own.

One afternoon a young student, Allan Steele,* came to my office and insisted that I listen to some of his taped poems. I had not had him in any class and did not then know his name. We went to a vacant classroom to join a fellow student. They had taped the poems in their car on the road, Allan reading aloud. From the unwinding tapes, it was clear he had talent. The thought must have drifted through my mind: If students cared this much, where was I?

A contest and a journal they would have, somehow. Could I swing it? First, I would have to get permission to try. That, in my rosy vision, did not bother me. I boldly went with my proposal to Dean James Browning. Without a moment's hesitation, he said, sure, go ahead (or words to that effect); put one out each semester. I protested that in two-year colleges the turn-over of students is fast and, above all, they are not mature enough. We settled for one issue a year.

On that last point concerning maturity of students, I was wrong. Enrolled were war veterans, fathers, mothers, older students from foreign countries, some refugees from World War II Europe, and, among others, many already successful in the business world. They probably knew and understood more about this world and its inhabitants than I ever did or would know.

From the beginning, the magazine was to be free. No fee from students. The college would pay all bills including printing. How could one hope for more?

In 1959, the first issue appeared, named *The Green Mask*. Why? I cannot recall a specific reason except that one of our committee, Margaret Wedge, was chairman of Speech and Drama. Alton Reeves, who taught courses of the finest of Fine Arts, joined Mrs. Wedge and me as the first committee. We met and planned during an afternoon hour free from classes in Reeves' combined office and classroom. A small kettle of tea from his hot plate helped to fortify us.

For a modest and cautious beginning, we offered only two categories: poetry and short story. Money conscious, we published only the First Honors of each: Allan Steele and Keith Laducer. The first issue, *The Green Mask*, nearly broke my heart. It seemed feeble and amateurish, not worthy of the students' work.

Pale green construction paper served as front and back covers. Our double-spaced typing went to off-set, printing, cutting costs. The printer gave me the loose pages and covers punched by two holes on the left margin. We were to take it from there. Two students and lone evening in my office worked, paginating in separate stacks from the pile of loose sheets. With that in order, how was I going to put them together, cover to cover? My bright idea was to draw white yarn threaded with gold (for a little class) through the holes and tie a dainty bow or knot.

When in 1959 we finally distributed *The Green Mask*, the students loved it. Dean Browning sent a note of congratulations. In the

* [Editor's note: Allan Steele's poem, "One Hamburger, No Mustard," is reprinted in this volume.

second year, 1960, we went professional when Dean Browning urged me to go to the "best printer in town" and turn out a slick copy. Our committee decided on a new title. From several suggestions, we agreed on *Patterns.* Thus it has remained. That edition contained the first Personal Essay category and the cover design was the first of many of student artists.

In 1961 Max Smith, Assistant to the Provost at MSU, asked for a "half dozen" copies of *Patterns* to distribute in their English department. They were sent. In a letter dated April 17, 1961, Warner G. Rice, Chairman of English Language and Literature at U of M, wrote there is "good reason to be proud of *Patterns.*" He extended congratulations and good wishes.

By 1962 the Art Department was playing a vital role in *Patterns.* In 1963 another category of writing, the Critical Essay, was added to those of Poetry, Short Story, and Personal Essay. In 1965 Richard J. Colwell of the English Department joined the roster of judges and committee. He has remained a loyal, dedicated innovator and enthusiastic worker in the *Patterns* family.

A letter in 1965 from John C. Gerber, Chairman of the English Department, State University of Iowa (now University of Iowa), was especially meaningful for me. I had learned with pain in classes, seminars, and thesis that John Gerber's standards for compliments were tough. Of *Patterns* he said it "is one of the better college literary magazines" and "astonishingly good" for two-year college level.

The year 1968 was one of change. The name of the college was changed from Port Huron Junior College to St. Clair County Community College. That year marked the tenth anniversary of *Patterns* and the Preface from that issue sums up the sense of accomplishment shared in its continued publication:

> For me personally, this decade culminates in a deep sense of gratification and renewed faith. . faith that young Americans will ever find in the rhythm and idiom of their native tongue the most human means of communicating some aspect of the life we all share.

In the early years, distribution of *Patterns* was rigid. The method did indeed add to students' excitement and anticipation. At exactly 8:00 a.m. not a second before or after by the wall clock the jam of students in the the main lower hall moved up to sign for single copies. The supply was gone within the hour.

The year 1969 marked eleven wonderful years for me with *Patterns.* At the same time, according to Michigan law, it marked my retirement from the classroom and all that had become the most important part of my life. In the final issue under my direction, two staunch supporters of *Patterns* were recognized. In the first of many Dedications, Alton F. Reeves was honored "as an excellent teacher, a fine scholar, and a gentleman in the true sense of the word." His teaching of the Humanities — music, art, and literature — was his unique contribu-

tion to the College. The Preface acknowledged the strong administrative support we had enjoyed: "Full measure of gratitude should go to James Browning, former Dean of the College, for heartily supporting the proposal of the contest and the publication of winning and selected entries."

Every year since 1969, I have received a complimentary copy of *Patterns*. I am grateful and proud of its consistently excellent quality. If we appear to be proud of *Patterns*, let us remember that all of us worked hard, outside of our regular professional responsibilities, and held fast to high standards. Above all, tribute should be paid to the many students who have contributed so splendidly. Many students published in *Patterns* have gone on to earn advanced degrees. Several have gone into teaching and related professions at home and abroad.

Now, in 1984, caught in the current national economic crunch, budget cutting has stripped *Patterns* bare. Gone are the days of free financing by the college. Yet *Patterns* continues because of people who believe in its value to students and to the college. Under the leadership of Patrick Bourke, Division Administrator of Humanities and Communications, faculty, administrators, staff, former students, townspeople, and other friends who believe *Patterns* should not be allowed to die have gone on their own to raise funds. They have succeeded in these past three years.

To you who strive for excellence and contribute to keep this fine project alive, I salute and love all of you.

Patterns: Our Second Twenty-Five Years

Clifford Johnson

Following the Silver Anniversary edition, in which Blanche Redman's account of *Patterns*' first quarter-century (above) was printed, for the next thirteen years the publication of *Patterns* followed an established pattern: a black & white, saddle stitched or perfect-bound magazine of a size to fit together on a shelf as a set. While, of course, the contents of the magazine continued to reflect the individual artistic visions of our students, the look of the magazine communicated an ongoing unity of design.

One new feature, starting with the 25th edition, which was to become an integral part of *Patterns* was the debut of our first "name" award, the Eleanor Mathews Award for creative excellence. The first recipient of the Mathews Award was Stephen Strobbe, one of the most outstanding creative talents ever to come out of SC4. The Mathews Award would eventually be joined by four additional awards named for individuals whose contributions to *Patterns* over the years we've honored. (For more on the Mathews, Colwell, Redman, Bourke, and Nickerson awards, see the appropriate sections listed in the table of contents.)

In 1997, we introduced a series of innovations that have been incorporated into each issue of *Patterns* to this day. Beginning with the 39th edition, *Patterns* was printed in-house under the artistic direction of the Fine Arts staff. The 39th edition broke out of the black and white, vertically-oriented standard with a rusty-red cover, two-color ink on textured paper, and a horizontal layout with post binding. A second innovation was the introduction of visiting judges from outside the College; this new practice began with the generous volunteer contributions of area writers and was followed with the establishment of the Forum (see below). Thirdly, the 1997 edition of *Patterns* was the first to be submitted to the Community College Humanities Association (CCHA) annual Literary Magazine Competition; we started strong with a third place finish in the Central Division (including nine US states and all of Canada). Since then, we are proud to say that *Patterns* has repeatedly been awarded First Place in its division and has garnered a Second Place and Honorable Mention as well.

The 40th edition, also marking SC4's 75th anniversary, was our second special issue, distinguished by some of the best aesthetic qualities of any of our editions and featuring works by several *Patterns* alumni. This volume won the first of three (so far) First Place awards in the CCHA competition.

Professor Jim Frank, then new to the College and to *Patterns*, took it upon himself in 1999 to submit to the Michigan Council for the Arts a grant proposal to fund the *Patterns* Visiting Artists Forum, a visiting writers program that brings prominent authors to our campus each spring to serve as judges in the writing competition, to meet and conduct workshops with students and members of the community, and to give readings of their work following the annual *Patterns* Reception. Thus, in 2000 the publication of the 42nd edition included authors Jane Bradley and Tim Geiger as the first Forum judges/visiting writers.

MCA's continuing support since then has allowed us to host an impressive list of poets, novelists, playwrights, translators, and essayists: J.D. Dolan, Pamela Gemin, Mike Magnuson, Richard Jackson, Christine Hume, Christina Milletti, John DuVal, Carla Harryman, Erin McGraw, Linda Gregerson, Eileen Pollack, and Raymond McDaniel.

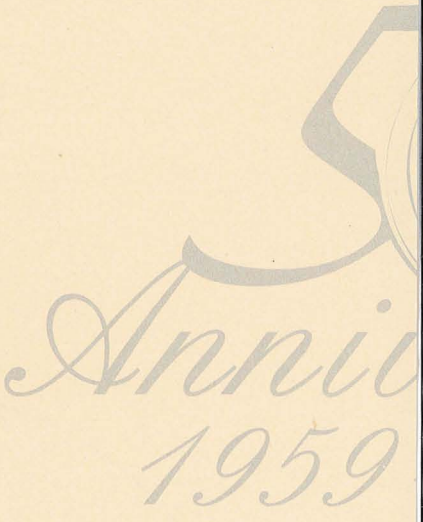
The final note in bringing our history of *Patterns* up to the present day is to remark on the increasing role that SC4 students have played in the creation of each issue. Starting with the award-winning 46th edition, teams of Fine Arts students have taken over the layout and design duties that used to be handled by College staff. These students have won widespread praise for the excellence of their work. While the judging and much of the organizational work behind *Patterns* continues to be handled by volunteers from the SC4 faculty and staff, each year our students are taking on increased responsibility for a wide range of editorial duties. Given that *Patterns* has always been first and foremost about our students, and that it was created in the first place at the instigation and inspiration of a student [Allan Steele, see Table of Contents], it seems fitting to end our history with this hopeful new trend of student involvement in all aspects of *Patterns*.



Dedication

The first volume of the 50th edition of Patterns is dedicated to the student writiers and artists whose creative voices and visions have been featured in this magazine since its inception.

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2008

First Place Poem

One Hamburger, No Mustard

Allan Steele

Even in Detroit,
Even on the road smelly
With exhausts and vibrating
All passing eardrums rudely,
Even against whirs and clinks
Mad with fury, determined to DO
---something (we fail to understand
Just, what, and my language like my
Senses, has begun to fail me)_____
A young woman walks about,
Delicately suspended and touchingly
Hidden in Dacron from the suspicious
Chemists' laboratory. At the hamburger
Joint refugees from industry and television
Stand looking over the counter, a voice
Warm and delicately like her breasts and
The gentle movement of her hips and
The firm smooth strength of her legs
Made me wish the damned radio was off.
Some insincere slob was trying to say
That we should run down to somethings'
Television appliance store to invest
In further death, because, he said, it
Is the cheapest on the market, and
A real bargain.

Then
Life (she had black hair, and she wore
Blue shorts) walked over to the radio
And turned it off, and asked me
What would I like? All I said was
One hamburger, no mustard.

The
Refugees had strained faces framed
In 'duck tail crew cuts, they drove cars
But still the dank loneliness festered
In their eyes, and when one lanky young one
Just out for a drive sat down, he smirked
A gentle apology to say to her he too
Thought the whole long highway,
The whole long factory,
The whole long upsetting day___was silly.

Cover Art

Green Mask

Green Mask Dramatic Society

GREEN MASK

21

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CREATIVE WRITING AWARDS

1959

Port Huron Junior College

Port Huron, Michigan

1959 First Edition

Eiko

Robert Lents

The misty rain came down steadily. It gathered in pools and ran in illuminated rivulets, washing the city clean. Trash swirled around the right foot of a young man sitting on the curb, as it traveled along the gutter. The young man watched dully as a scrap of red paper skittered around his shoe and on down the gutter. His face was a macabre mask, illuminated by the many neon signs that ran unbrokenly up and down the narrow, dirty alley.

"Come on, Paul." said a voice behind him. "Get up. There ain't nothin' you can do."

Paul seemed not to hear; indeed, he seemed oblivious even to the hushed murmuring of the crowd gathered near by. His eyes continued to follow the piece of red paper as it floated on until, it came to a halt against a mounting pile of scraps blocked by another shoe. This shoe was small and dainty, also red; it was on the foot of what had been a young and beautiful girl. She lay curiously crumpled, half in the gutter. "She loved those shoes." said Paul. "They matched her good dress."

"What? What did he say, Mike? I can't understand him."

"Don't know, Ralph-san. He talk about shoes," said the little man standing beside the other. He wore a white apron and nervously wiped his hands on it as his slanted eyes glanced up the alley just as a police jeep turned into it.

"Come on, Paul,"said Ralph. "There's nothin' to do now. Hell, boy, it's over." He touched the seated man's shoulder, "She's just a —"

"Shut up, Ralph." Paul said flatly, knocking the hand away.

Two small blue-uniformed policemen elbowed their way through the crowd. The two men moved over to them, Mike beginning a rapid chatter in Japanese. A minute later, after bowing quickly to the policemen, he typed to Ralph, "Paul-san must go to police station. They want to ask questions." And then more slowly, glancing at Paul, "Why you not tell him everything? *Kore wa warui desu.*"

"You're right, Mike, this is bad. But it'd really tear hell out of him if I did." He walked back toward Paul, then stopped and turned. "You comin' with us?"

"No, I go back to work. Mama-san much mad. She say this bad for business."

"You tell Mama-san to go to hell!" said Ralph disgustedly. "Tell her to bring her beer out here if she's so anxious to sell it." He turned and grasped Paul's arms. "Get up, Paul; here comes the ambulance. We gotta' go down to the local clink, they've got some questions to ask."

"Yah, yah," said Paul almost absently as he stood up. His face which had been completely devoid of expression, suddenly screwed up as in pain. "Why? Why did that goddamned taxi have to hit her?" He hid his face in his hands sobbing, "Oh God.... God..."

"Snap out of it, Paul!" said Ralph roughly, grabbing his shoulders, "She was just a Jap! She was no good, a —"

"Goddamm you!" screamed Paul grabbing at Ralph's shirt. "Shut up! I loved her, can't you understand? I loved her! We were going to be married!" He turned away suddenly; sobbing, "Eiko.....Eiko, oh

1960 Second Edition

God,why?"

"Ok, ok, Paul," said Ralph softly. "Let's go. The cops want us to go with them." He turned to Mike who was walking back into the bar; "Are you sure you 'can't come with us, Mike? We'll need somebody who can talk to the cops. Can they talk English?"

"Ok, I come," said Mike, taking off his apron and handing it to one of the girls in the doorway of the bar. "To hell with Mama-san," he said grinning quickly.

They squeezed slowly into the police jeep and remained silent as it moved off into the Tokyo traffic. Ralph looked at Paul and then turned to Mike saying, "Talk to him Mike. Make him see it."

Mike looked uncomfortably at Ralph and then to Paul said, "I know her long time Paul-san, more long than you. She work at Cello two, maybe three years. She just like money, she a —"

"Knock it off, Mike," said Paul not moving. Mike glanced at Ralph and shrugged. They said no more.

When they reached police headquarters, they saw that the ambulance had just arrived at the morgue next to the station. Paul got out of the jeep and began running directly up the steps, but stopped and turned as the attendants took the body out of the ambulance. Suddenly a slightly built Japanese man rushed down the steps past Paul crying; "Eiko-san... Eiko-san..." and threw himself across her body, sobbing brokenly.

"Who is that?" asked Paul as though coming out of a dream. "Who is he, Ralph?" Ralph turned away. "Mike! Who is he?" cried Paul, suddenly in panic.

Mike looked sadly at Paul and slowly, almost inaudibly murmured, "Her husband, Paul-san her husband."

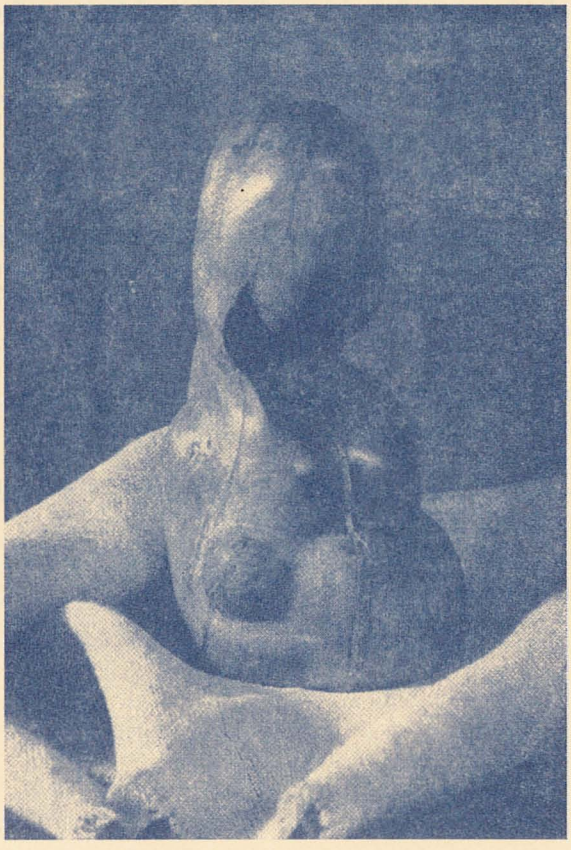
"Her husband?" gasped Paul incredulously, staggering back as though struck. "Oh, my God, her husband?"

First Place Art

Mother and Child

Judith Valentine

24



1960 Second Edition

First Place Poem

Unplayed Instrument

Elsa Jakob

I am a harp whose strings
the idle winds caressed
and thereby caused to ring
with vague, atonal whispering.

One came and drew a crashing chord
and ready sound sprang to life,
then died. It left awareness of
a latent voice awaiting wakening.

And then I heard the tread of one
who made the gold and silver threads
reverberate. His knowing hands brought forth
the tunes I knew within me waited to be freed.

And melody poured soaring forth
and filled the air with harmony
which could have been a lasting source
of joy to all, to him and me.

But he went on in splendid solitude,
and I, aware of wondrous song
still slumbering in me,
must wait for him who knows
to call it forth to come
ere drying breath of time
turns the strings tinny, brittle, bent,
and tarnish mars the unplayed instrument.

First Place Art

Untitled

Caroline Blunt

26



1961 Third Edition

Two Dreams

Janet Wyllie

Any time during that whole summer I could close my eyes and have either one of my Dreams come to me. At first it was rather nice to live different lives like that, but after a while when the summer began to die very slowly, it wasn't fun any more and instead my Dreams began to pester me and they were like a pain that isn't bad enough to make you go to a doctor, but bothers you enough so that you can't sleep.

In June I used to sit out on my front steps, waiting for Jack to come over, and I'd dig the heel of my shoe into the dirt and have first one Dream and then the other. I could sit out there just like that for hours, until there were mosquito bites around my legs where my bermudas didn't reach down to the top of my kneesocks. Those nights alone on the steps with the living room lights shining out the window and the bugs slapping against the screen made me happy, but that was just a little while after school let out.

In July I didn't have time in the nights to sit outside and it was on Sunday afternoons when I'd sit outside and sketch and the back of my neck itched because the sun was so hot on it, that I had my Dreams. But they weren't very good then because Jack would be nearby, and when he smiled or talked to me, it was hard to be objective about Dreams.

One Dream was kind of hazy, for it was my Dream about the Unknown. It was like autumn and cold mornings and hot coffee and falling leaves and books and quiet libraries and Saturday games and heavy plaid skirts and long-sleeved sweaters and new faces and new fears and college boys with crew cuts and the Unknown.

The other Dream was Jack and Flowers and Showers and parties and my own house in the city I knew and loved. It was marriage to Jack in the early fall, and always, being close to Mom and Dad and having my children attend the same grade school as Jack and I, and being home forever.

Everyone I knew was either in one Dream or the other. Ann and Barb belonged to my Flowers and Showers. Dream. When they came over at night, the other Dreams faded away. We'd go up in my room as we used to do when we were little and we'd lie on my double bed with the fluffy pink spread and look at the sloping eaves plastered with pennants and souvenirs from out-of-town basketball games and snapshots and dance decorations, and we'd talk.

"I know just how I'm going to do the kitchen," Ann said. "I think I'm even more excited about our apartment than the wedding."

"Just think," Barb sighed, sitting up and wrapping her arms around her knees and smiling at us, "in just one little week Ann will be Mrs. Robert Likins and in just five weeks I'll be Mrs. Dave Guire. I bet real soon Jack will give you a ring!" she said, letting me into their world again.

And then we'd talk about weddings and whether or not a bride should wear her hair pushed back and what to give bridesmaids for a present and if Mr. Currie really took better pictures and how much fun it would be to have two whole weeks in New York City and see all the shows and the stores and go walking with your husband and be so very

much in love. Then we'd talk about learning to cook and sew better and going to church meetings in the afternoons and knowing that we belonged to Port Huron.

Later we'd go downstairs and sit in the kitchen with Mom and have a coke and potato chips. Mom would keep asking Ann about her plans for the reception and would look at me and smile inside. I knew she wanted me to marry Jack in the fall and have a pretty wedding and then settle down and start copying recipes and keeping house the way that she had taught me. Of course, Mom would never say anything like this, but when Ann and Barb were there and she smiled at me like that, I knew what she meant.

This was the end of June and then came July and I was working in the office all day and going to showers for Ann and Barb and having fittings on my bridesmaids' formals and seeing Jack all the time. He'd pick me up after the parties and we'd walk home together and I'd tell him how pretty Barb looked, standing at the table and opening the gifts and saying, "It's just what we can use," and then he'd take my hand and I could see myself smiling that bride-to-be, thank-you-oh-so-very-much smile. Jack always made me feel that way.

Soon both Ann and Barb were married and I remembered how I cried at both of their weddings because I was so happy for them. A couple of months later Ann called me and wanted me to come over and see her; so I did.

I couldn't help watching her eyes all the time she talked and I saw the look that sometimes appears after the Flowers and Showers are gone. She made coffee for us, and it was bitter and I felt like crying for Ann and for the look in her eyes. I felt like crying for her because already her kitchen was fixed and because her husband Bob couldn't find a job and because she was tired and lonely. At nineteen it was too soon to feel that way.

I walked home slowly and felt the way you feel when you've had a pain for a long time and then suddenly you realize that where it was, there is emptiness and nothing hurts any more. I knew Mom would feel bad and Jack would say softly, "Well, honey, it's up to you." Inside I knew if the Flowers and Showers Dream was right and should happen, time wouldn't bruise it anyway. Time was what I needed most so that later I would never feel resentful toward Jack if my afternoons grew too long. I knew Dad would be proud and that afterwards when I came home again to Jack from college, I would be able to read in the afternoons.

I shuffled my feet in the dry leaves and thought I'd better get some new loafers and maybe stop at Sue's house before I went home for supper.

First Place Art

The Deeep Inspiration

Terry Lee Tarzwell



The Volcano

Paul F. Samarc

The echo of Mt. Verity is garbled
Its boundless phlegm is spat.
But the slouchlands slur the snarling caveat
And are varnished by the singeing ooze.

Strange people these
Surviving saturation
As a babe survives his suckling,
Thriving on lactiferous lava
Vehemently vomited from the vociferous pap.
The excremented ash becomes their lifeline.

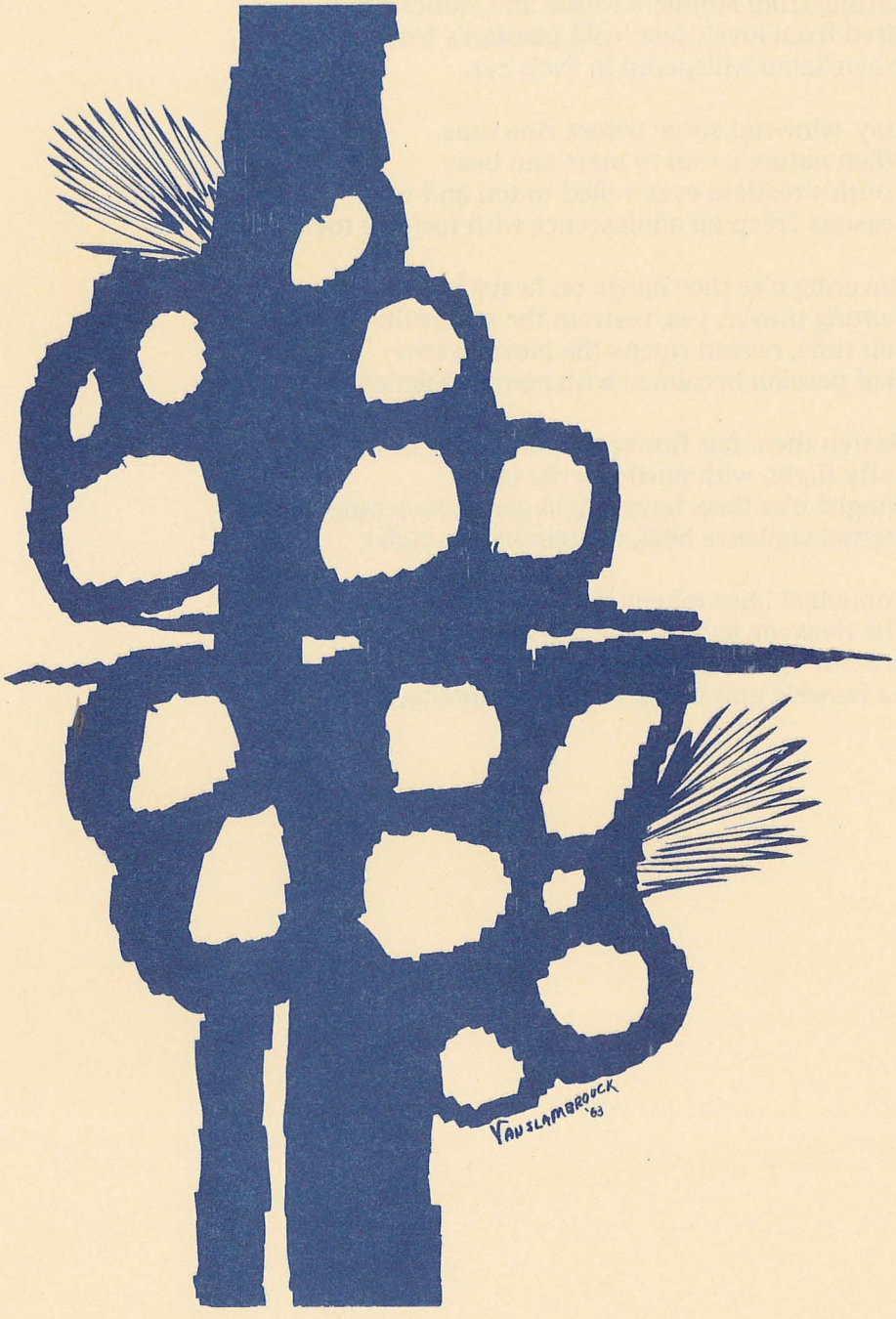
Unique people these—proudly unaware of vivid iniquity,
Anxious to visit nearby villages on condescending missions.
One set out at dusk, on such a journey;
The same returns at dawn with news.
My patronizing mission is completed,
But fate has made our plans askew.
It was the pure, unscathed who gloated;
The unerring flawless logic was a sham.
How can this be?
Are we not living proof of greatness?
And now turned lepers of the commonwealth?
Neglected, rejected, ejected.

Within the microcosm of our hermitage
Alone lie personal successes.
Vast fructification be ours then.
Let our kingdom rise.
Posterity shall believe in their heredity with devotion
And propagate our message to all corners,
Like a single cancerous apple blighting multitudes
Until decillions languish in our stead.

First Place Art

Abstract Design # 2

Jerry Vanslambrouck



Solicitude

Marion Dawe

Hearken, child of sorrow-nurtured joy
Sprung from Mother's womb and Father's loin
Sired from love's lust, wild passion's tear
When Satan whispered in Eve's ear.

Stay, wine-red surge before ripe time,
When nature's wail to mate and bear
Youth's restless eyes veiled to toil and woe,
Seasons creep on adolescence with tortoise toe.

Hovering o'er thee hangs on heavy breast
Panting prayer, yea, restrain the surreptitious step.
Full time, reason ripens the mortal sense
Mad passion becalmed with responsibleness.

Hasten then, fair flower to embrace in love's
Lofty flight, with purity as the dove
Winged o'er thee, hovering in gentle sweeping, high
Eternal vigilance held, contemplation sighs.

Connubial bliss tokens the wise restraint
The Heavens anchor while chaos escapes.
In Eden's garden see sunrise oft,
As Genesis unfolds to Michael humming soft.

Untitled

Lee Leim



The Blank Silence

Judy Postill

The truths Robert Frost seeks are innate in the heart of men and in common objects. He looks on common things and finds in them uncommon meanings: the desert places represent the loneliness found in the heart. Frost deals with the blank silence and stark loneliness of our modern society. He obviously recognizes this aspect of our supposedly advanced civilization and brings it to our attention, but he doesn't actually offer a solution for this emptiness, Frost desperately asks God, or the supreme being of our universe for an answer, yet he knows there will be no response, only the continued blank silence and eternal void of our lives.

Two of Frost's poems very explicitly portray this universal feeling of blankness and emptiness found in our society today. "Desert Places" in its sombre and quiet tone presents a detailed picture of what, at first glance, appears to be merely the deathlike scene of a wilderness:

> Snow falling and night falling fast oh fast
> In a field I looked into going past,
> And the ground almost covered smooth in the snow,
> But a few weeds and stubble showing last.

But more closely observed, this image which Frost paints is discovered as being the desert places of the heart. There is no answer to man's problems and there will be no answer, only the continued silence and blankness of our modern lives. This tragedy and heartbreak are expressed in casual everyday diction. The loneliness and white blankness are ubiquitous and eternal with no hope of their ever lessening:

> And lonely as it is that loneliness
> Will be more lonely ere it will be less
> A blanker whiteness of benighted snow
> With no expression, nothing to express.

There is nothing more frightening than the emptiness of the desert places found in the heart, not even in the empty spaces of the universe where no human beings exist: "I have it in me so much nearer home / To scare myself with my own desert places." In "Acquainted with the Night" we find this same searching for reassurance of a divine power and an answer to man's reason for living. God does not speak for modern man. There are no guidelines; man is entirely alone. The "night" in this poem represents more than the darkness which follows the day. It is the feeling of blankness and heartbreak of mankind. Man's time is not the time of the universe, which is symbolized by the empty stare of the clock face.

This poem very effectively expresses what Frost and other contemporary poets feel is man's loss of a sense of direction. One cannot depend on clocks or other mechanical devices for guidance: "One luminary clock against the sky / Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right." Where is man to turn for consolation and reassurance in the

tumult of life when all he can find is the blank silence of a superficial world? "I have been acquainted with the night."

Frost's philosophy is profound, yet not incomprehensible. He reaches out to the human heart and human understanding with simple, direct matter-of-fact language. He is never carried away with emotion, and reading his poetry creates a 'feeling of awareness which causes man to examine his soul. This is how the Frost method of conveying an idea functions. His down-to-earth attitudes and simple words which fit into conventional verse forms picture his world and thoughts with remarkable clarity.

Frost's words are homely words which might be used by two farmers meeting on a country road yet each term is packed with meaning. The clever repetition of onomatopoetic sounds gives life to Frost's poetry: "Snow falling and night falling fast oh fast." Also in this same line we find the exclusion of punctuation in normally required places, which allows the feeling and words to flow along smoothly and uninterrupted.

Frost doesn't exercise complete empathy. Even though he frequently goes beyond the realm of mankind, he always returns to mortal human beings and earth, finding comfort in life and reality. He knows enough to draw a line between man and nature. Unlike tragic Narcissus, Frost knows better than to stop and ponder too long. It is permissible to pause and wonder but not linger because the beauty may devour you and keep you in its grasp. Man might momentarily seek another world, but must return to himself for strength and not seek it in this universe.

Untitled

Joesph A. Vitovec



A Short Story

Nancy Kempf

It was an icy, dark December day, still in the early morning, when he found himself in the bare room, light less and paintless. The wind whistled through the cracks in the weather-aged boards. He had not been here in many, many years—he could not think of the number at the moment.

The sight of the house in this condition was expected, but the shock of its reality seemed too much to bear now. He closed his eyes and tears melted his frozen cheeks. He remembered grandma crying like this once, a long Christmas day ago when he gave her a small wooden horse he had carved so diligently to make perfect for her. He remembered how all his aunts, uncles, and cousins had gathered on that Christmas day, as others. Everything in this house was warm and yellow and cozy with the fire in the fireplace and lights on the tree, and the people all loving each other. After dinner and presents, his favorite cousin Susie and he would steal up to the attic and dig through the dusty books that belonged to the other generations. It seemed that the best present of all was one of those books Grandma would permit them to keep. . . .

Grandma . . . Grandma and Grandpa. . . . the most perfect man and woman that had ever lived. It must be that people can grow out of sin, he thought. He knew them only when they were old, and they always had, it seemed, been under God's haloes. God always seemed about them, continually blessing them, especially in this house. It always heard his prayers, shouts of laughter and sometimes cries of sadness.

. . . cries . . . shouts . . . shouts of . . . shouts!

"Why live this mad wheel of life and death!? What in hell is it all about anyway!? Good people die, just like the bad!"

"It isn't fair—a lifetime of laughter recollected ends in tears — as does a lifetime of tears! Oh God, it isn't fair!"

The imbalance echoing in the silence struck him to realize that he had been screaming through his anger of injustice.

He opened his eyes but was still blinded by water—salty water that seemed to run endlessly into his mouth and back in the circle to his eyes again.

He cleared them to see the darkness vanishing, for presently the sun broke through the greyed clouds. He ran outside to meet it.

It was the clock to remind him that it was almost time for all the children to be coming home with their little ones for Christmas dinner and presents.

He hurried to the car.

Untitled

Joan Y. Smith



His Chair

Chris Blume

I am an old chair now with curvature of the spine and arms that are no longer firm and strong. My upholstery is faded and worn. Once again I stand in the small den of a comfortable house, as I did when new. But I have seen and heard much during the years in between.

Soon after I came to live with him, the Boss received a promotion and we moved to another city. As the movers carried me in I could see the new house was larger and more pretentious than my first home. But, lovely as it was, I was not very happy there. The Boss was away on business trips most of the time and it was lonely. Fortunately, we did not stay in that house very long.

My next home was a beautiful old house that stood with quiet dignity atop a hill. From the long windows in the library I could look out over the rolling hills and watch the seasons pass. The boss spent many hours with me here; reading, working with sheaves of papers and planning the expansion of his company. We entertained a lot and, somehow, the men always seemed to gather in the library and I could listen to the laughter and good "man talk" that filled the room. We had lived there for about five years, when one day, a man came in with the Boss and I heard them discussing a farm and an "even exchange" and I knew we were going to move again.

The farm was beautiful. The house was low and rambling, surrounded by trees, with a creek running nearby. I learned it was an experimental dairy farm and I came to know the other side of the man we called, "the Boss".

During the week he would return from the city, a typically well-dressed executive, and pass the evening with me going over the ever present papers. The main topics of conversation were machinery, production, operating costs, and related subjects. But during the weekends. . .! Saturday evenings he would sink down into my cushion with a grunt of satisfaction; the odor of animals about him, straw sticking to his plaid shirt and corduroy pants, and the talk would be of butter fat content, pounds of milk/and other things of vital interest to dairy men. His wife objected to his informal attire in the house but he assured her that, "Nobody else sits in my old chair anyway", and that was that. It was in this house that I faced my only crisis.

One evening, Mrs. Boss brought in a fussy little man who waved his hands about as he talked. He said, "The Library should be done over entirely in red leather and that awful chair will have to go!" However, the Boss was adamant. He refused to let them touch the library, and as he settled himself firmly on my cushion, I sighed with relief.

Time passed swiftly. The Boss was away again for days at a time. When he was home I heard a lot of talk about a War and the difficulty of getting competent help to run the farm. Finally, we moved again; this time to our present home.

The last few years have been good years. The Boss and his wife spent most of their evenings with me in the den, reading or talking to one another. He seemed to have found the peace and contentment he had so long deserved. But one day, not so long ago, Mrs. Boss came and knelt by my side and buried her face in my cushion. I could feel her

tears as she whispered we would spend no more happy times together.

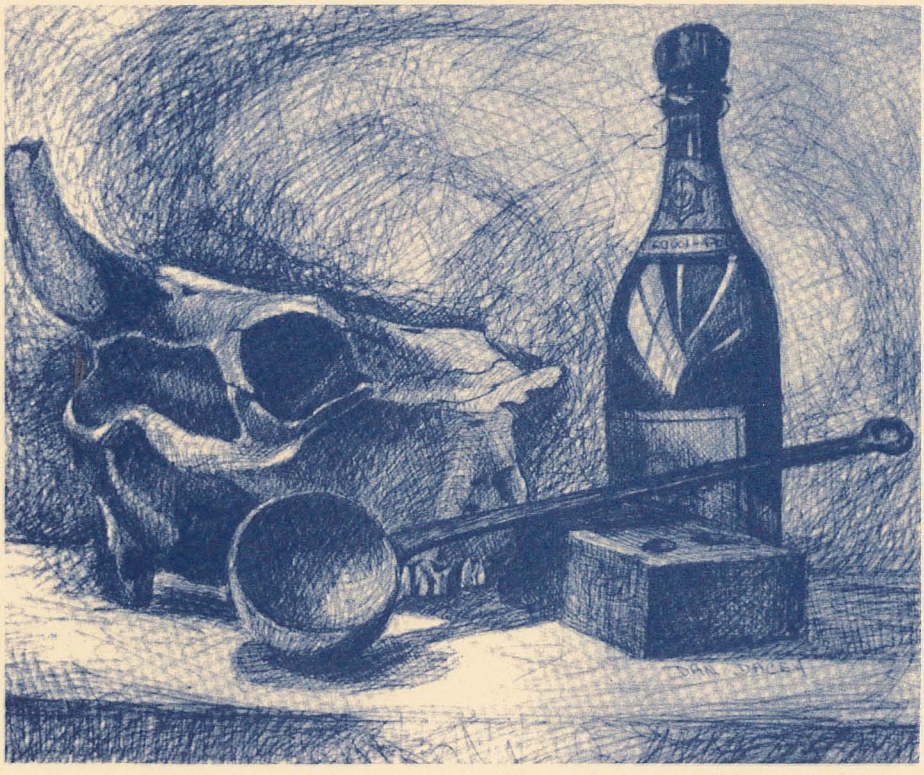
Now, late at night, when the house is quiet, she comes and curls up in me and I try, somehow, to comfort her and let her know he has not really gone. His strength and spirit are still here to guide and sustain her; and sometimes I feel I succeed.

First Place Art

Still Life

Dan Dacey

41



1967 Ninth Edition

The Smile

Eizabeth Posey

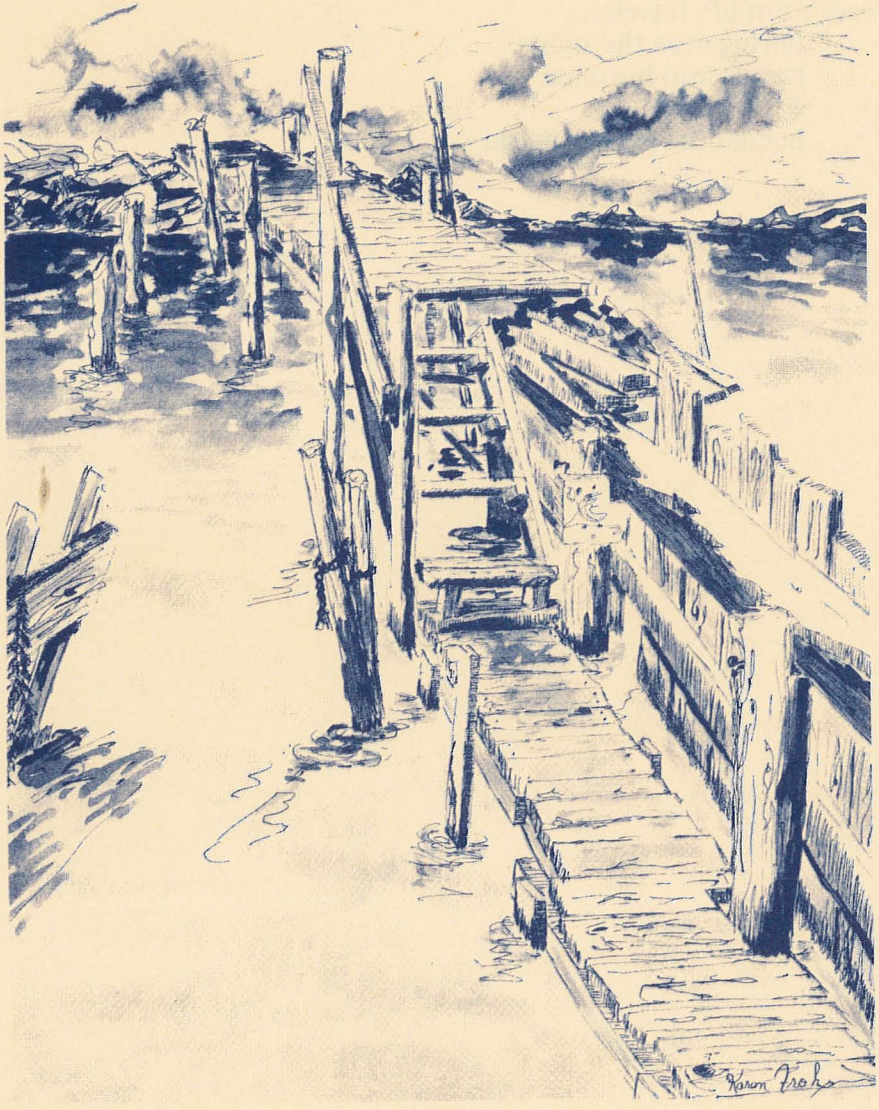
i was walking
far gone day
first day of summer
last day of may
met a young girl
who gathering hay
looked at my clothes in wide-eyed dismay
"why come you here dressed so richly
with eye full of tear?"
i gazed at her figure
light and gay
last day of winter
first day of may
i parted my lips
and started to say .
but winds of autumn scattered hay
so i turned from her smile
and went on my way

i was walking highways one day
middle of winter
far from may
looking a field with sun shining down
looking a maid in briar-torn gown
i came on a lady aged and weak
whose gray hair with gold was sparingly streaked
"why go you so sadly
head hanging down
dressed so poorly
in briar-torn gown
do you remember warm day in may i spoke to you softly
while raking my hay?"
i gazed at yon lady weighing delay
whose face glowed so warmly cold winter day
but warm winds of summer blew thru my hair
so i turned from her quickly
first day of may
i turned from her quickly
went on my way

i have been walking many long day
thru many long winter
many long may
i have been searching many long year
but none do i find
that sweetly beguile
secret of love
held in her smile
and so i will wish
lonely long day
that just for awhile
i would have stayed

Scene

Karen Froh



Clown

Ruthette Cressman

Painted face,
brooding pathos
etched deeply;
Pagliacci's face
and heart,
bruised by reality.

Hiding
hiding
Weary worn life traveler,
having seen the sights,
crawls into his mind—
Safe
behind the foolish mask.

Figure

Jean Baker



Old Dog

John Owen

He came slowly into the hall and closed the door firmly behind him. He leaned heavily against the door frame letting his hand linger on the knob. It had been another bad day. His light overcoat, damp from the steady drizzle, was thrown carelessly over other coats hanging in the closet.

Slowly he paced through the hall, across the living room and into the kitchen. From the cupboard he took a nearly full bottle of rye and looked ruefully at the litter of dirty glasses, plates and cutlery that filled the sink. Selecting a glass that appeared less dirty than the others he rinsed it under the tap and gave it a cursory wipe with a soiled tea towel. The bottle and glass were placed on the table. A short step to the refrigerator resulted in a tray of ice cubes. A pan on the table held a bit of water from last night's unused cubes and this was dumped into the sink. The tray was quickly emptied and the pan returned to its place. He poured a long drink and threw in two cubes of ice. Putting the glass to his lips he tilted his head back and drank nearly half of the contents.

Pulling up a chair he sat briefly at the table. Not yet. It was too quiet. A quick sip of rye and he stood again and walked thoughtfully into the living room.

The record cabinet was open and several records and jackets were scattered beneath it and on a chair near by. With some urgency he sorted through the pile. Tonight? With a pause he rejected "The Sound of Music"; that was for nights when he felt that he could climb mountains. Tijuana Brass; too bold, the beat too insinuating. Tonight it would have to be music that crashed like ocean waves on a rocky shore. He picked two; a concerto by Rachmaninoff and one of selections from Wagner. The player came to life and he adjusted the speakers slightly. Turning up the volume he headed back toward the kitchen.

Passing the hall he reached up into the upper portion of the closet. When he returned to the kitchen he was carrying a small army haversack. It dropped gently from his hand to the table and in a moment was replaced by the drink. This time he emptied it.

As the glass was filled for the second time he thought about the war but the thoughts were confused. He took another drink and when the glass was returned to the table, pulled the bag toward him. Undoing the strap he extracted an object wrapped heavily in cloth. He unwound it slowly and with care extracted a large military revolver. He broke the action and looked through the barrel at the ceiling light. Dust, he thought, and perhaps a bit of pitting. That would never do. Stepping to the closet he returned with a small box; a cleaning kit.

It had been a long time since he had used the revolver but his fingers unlatched the cylinder and removed it without fumbling. Shortly after moving into the house he had been asked twice to dispose of neighborhood dogs. The wire brush was dipped into the solvent and he scrubbed the barrel briskly for a moment. The dogs; two of them, a yappy little pekingese and a big friendly mongrel. With a short rod and a patch of cloth dipped in oil he swabbed the inside of the barrel and each of the chambers in the cylinder. He had hated the little dog. It had lived just two doors away and had always barked at him. The cylinder

slid into place and was locked.

The two dogs. When he had taken the little one to the dump to shoot, it had alternately barked and growled at him the entire way. When he stopped and tried to catch it in the car it had bitten him. Angrily he had grabbed it by a front leg and smashed it over the head with the barrel. It twiched in his hand and he had quickly shot it through the neck.

The big dog had been different. It was old and friendly and was more than willing to go in the car with him. He had been embarrassed and had concealed the revolver in his coat pocket from the house to the car. It was quickly stowed under the seat. The dog sat happily in the car and just as joyously jumped out at the end of the trip. During the war he had prided himself in being cool, decisive and efficient. It was only an old dog. The revolver bulged in his pocket as he walked a few yards from the car. The dog alternately sniffed at and wet upon various objects that interested him. It took several minutes until the dog's interest focused upon an object long enough for the man to step up behind him. He held the barrel about an inch from the back of the dog's head, cocked the hammer and fired.

The glass was empty and he slowly refilled it. This time pouring the rye over the ice cubes, he watched them rise nearly to the top of the glass. The music was loud yet in a way soothing. It could probably be heard in the house next door. To hell with them.

Reaching again into the bag he produced a box of cartridges and turned it idly in his hands. 455 Webley — 260 grain bullet. The box opened and a dozen or so of the dull brass and grey lead bullets lay before him. He sipped the drink and his hand put down the box and again raised the gun. He held it fondly. It had a comfortable feel and fitted his hand well. He broke the action and slowly inserted a cartridge into each of the six chambers. He spun the loaded cylinder gently and closed the action with a crisp snap.

The old dog. There were tears of self pity in his eyes. He raised the revolver and stared at its dark efficiency. His hand tightened on the trigger.

Suddenly there was silence. His own breath sounded loud. The record player clicked off. He dropped the gun and pushed it from him. The drink spilled and he watched the ice cubes slip over the side of the table. He was cold and clammy with sweat. He took a short step to the sink and was sick.

Untitled

David Buffington



Revelation

Dean Stern

Silence now
again
no more crunching
of feet
but only chirps and creaks

The buzzing of bugs goes on
the damned things
fly about
attacking us all
at least they're fighting for life

All the noise
is silence now
no more crunching
of feet
where have they gone?

The green and black box
transmits electronic instructions
yet its putrid flashes
are colored
green and black too
always ending black

listen
not daring to breathe
for a thump
or a hiss
if not a footstep

Silence still
after miles and inches of searching
no box
can break this curse

Silence
and then more

crying
in the distance me

damned quiet
free my guilt

Let me hear
the rattle of stones on the path
or the steel

click

Anything
 oh something
but the silence
sam and i
created

Silence
nothing can cover
the silence
of life
trickling away on the ground

Nothing—
 but more silence

Slavery

Marilyn Brown



Londonderry Aire

T.D. Mayhew

"Seems almost like 'ome to me any more," the grizzled Cockney sergeant said. "I've been 'ere so many times me wife thinks I'm 'avin' an affair over 'ere. Not that I wouldn't like to, mind you, but you knows our orders concern in' frat'rnizin' wi' the civilians." .

"From the looks we got coming in here, I rather doubt that there would be any civilians for us to fraternize with." One of the enlisted men, a light machine-gunner, was speaking. "British troops don't seem to be very welcome in 'Derry."

"No, they don't," another added. "It would be our bloody luck to come just after the IRA starts a policy of killing a British soldier for every Mick that gets his."

The Cockney sergeant grunted at the last comment. "Lor', they've been promisin' that for years. 'Ave you ever known an Irishman to keep a promise? Oh, a couple of us might buy it from a sniper, but a couple of us might get run over by a lorry, too. Chances are about the same. No, lads, there'll be a lot of rocks an' bottles, an' we might get a few of them, an' then it's allover an' we can all go back 'ome again until a few more Micks 'ave bit too much an' start thinkin' they're oppressed. Then we comes back again for the same o' thing."

A tall, thin youth stirred uneasily. "They, the Irish, might be right, you know. After all, they are Englishmen by law, and we have taken away some of their rights by—"

"Oooww! Look at our little barrister," interrupted the sergeant. "Well, Milord, wha should we do? Ask them to please settle down an' we'll elect Miss Devlin Prime Minister? Tell 'em that if they all stop throwin' cocktails that we'll march in Saint Paddy's Parade?"

"No, Sergeant, not that. I was just thinking — "

"Listen 'ere, Corporal, 'oo ever told you that yer to think? Yer in 'Er' Majesty's paratroops now, an' you'll let someone else do yer thinkin' 'oose job it is to think.Yer job is to do whatever 'e thinks you should do. Is that straight?"

"Yes," replied the corporal, "but the Catholics haven't been treated fairly. Something should be done for them."

The sergeant, annoyed by the corporal's first statement, had become angry and perturbed that a non-commissioned officer should question anything. "You never give up, do you?" he said as he went over to the corporal. "Well, mate, something can be done an' yer the man to do it. I wants you to let all those nice, innercent, loyal subjects of 'er Majesty to know where they stands an' 'ow we of the British Army really feels about them. In fact, I've even got a'special little mission for you so's you can go out an' mingle with 'em an' tell 'em what they should know. Sort of 'Public Relations', if you knows what I means."

"No, Sergeant, I don't. What exactly do you mean?" asked the corporal.

"I means," replied the sergeant, "that yer gain' to be patrollin' Bog side tonight."

In another part of Londonderry, in the Catholic section of Bogside, another group of men were discussing the presence of British troops, but with quite a different point of view.

"Some more paratroops came today," a young Irishman was saying. We're practically like an occupied country, we are. What can we do now?"

"Kill the whole damned lot of 'em," came a reply.

"Aye, send them all home in boxes," said another Irishman. "Then they'll be willin' to listen to us."

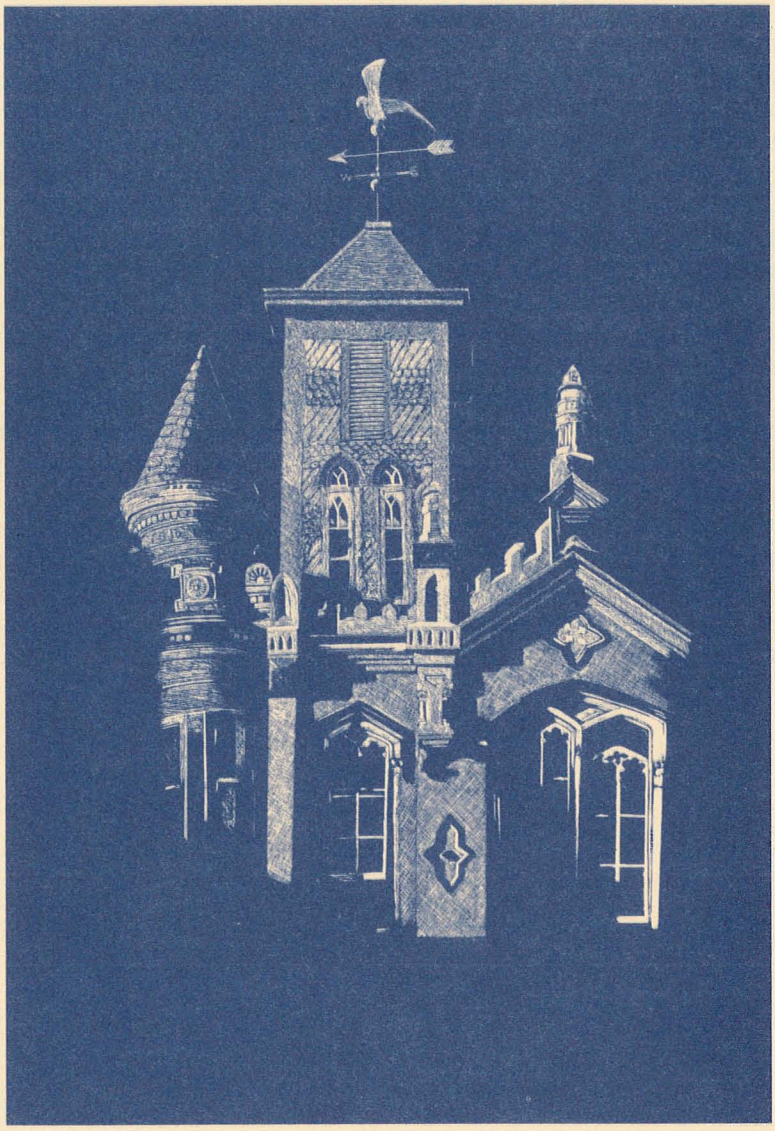
At the end of the table that the group was gathered about sat the oldest of them, a tall and powerful man in his fifties. He leaned forward in his chair and spoke. "Those are fine ideas you have, but then we'd be no better than those Englishman. No, I think that our original plan is still best. We'll avenge every Irish dead with a British soldier until they stop killing us or we kill all of them. They've no right to do what they've been doin'. They've got to know that they can't invade our homes, cart us off, and shoot our children. We must show them that we'll not tolerate this breach of our rights. Now, to business. The paratroops will be patrolling Bogside tonight. One of them must be shot. Only one. Sure, assassination is a nasty business, and I'll not order one of you to do it; I'll ask for a volunteer."

"Then it's that there's to be but one of us out tonight, and after but one Englishman?" One of the younger men, who had been standing near the door, came closer to the table. "Why can't we all go out and kill as many of them as we can?"

All of the eyes in the room were on the young man as the older quietly said to him, "We know that you've a thirst for vengeance. You need not remind us that your brother was killed by English bullets. But," he continued as he rose from the table, "I hope that I need not remind you that."

Architectual Study

Grenna Ward



The Frisbee Thrower

Richard Hudgins

Dawn smiles,
And the sky brushes
The stars from her silver hair.
A solitary boy
Tosses his frisbee,
Banking against the breeze.
His frisbee
Flys from his hand
And arches over the sky.

Again and again

In his mind
He is an acid-Nijinski,
Dancing a pas des deux.

His partner leaps into the sky.
Arms and legs trail
brightly colored arcs.

Two easy bounds,
He extends his arm,
And his partner has returned.

Agony

Mark McKnight



First Place Essay

The Information Explosion

Brian P. Gavin

The information explosion: few know about it, and fewer still care about it. Yet the over-abundance of printed and spoken material on any one subject in the news today is a situation worsening each year. Topics from every corner of society are treated and re-treated to such an extent that the freshness of any new approach to any topic is negated automatically. This situation is painfully obvious to the college student, whose frequent, futile attempts at creative "essaying" too often turn out to be only slightly sophisticated versions of "What I Did Over My Summer Vacation." Likewise, instructors grasping for originality in assignments find it hopeless, and the few worthwhile papers returned to them are thus merely additional kicks at various dead horses. More important than either of these considerations, however, is the determination of what effects the word "explosion" has had on America in general. Many effects are obvious, some are more subtle, but all deserve consideration.

Probably the most blatant reaction to the information boom in America today has come, not surprisingly, in, the media itself in the form of sensational journalism. Whereas yesterday observation and subsequent factual reporting were the desired ends of the media, today sees a situation utterly reversed. No longer is a simple account sufficient in good reporting. Rather the greater the excesses and the interpretations, the more desirable the report becomes. Consider, for example, the language of a local, youth-oriented radio station in its account of an assault and robbery in which the victim had several fingers cut off: "He (the thief) picked up the decapitated digit and ripped off the rock." Similarly, in a sports report by a Detroit-based T.V. station, the irate journalist providing the account angrily flushed certain major university athletic officials down the toilet. (The report was complete with sound effects.)

It is not difficult to determine the motivation of reporters who give reports such as these. The job of today's journalist is to lure from competing sources of information an audience. Sensational stories sell.

A second major consequence of the information explosion has evolved to a great extent from the first — Americans are never without a cause. Movements such as the Viet Nam peace push and the environmental panic, in addition to such debacles as the anti-communist panic of the early 50's serve as manifestations of the explosion in that they reflect the effects of sensational journalism. Photographs of dead Vietnamese babies beneath photo shots of American bombers probably did more to instigate the youth peace drive than anything, next to the draft. Similarly assisted was the environmental cleanup campaign, as pictures of cesspools where lakes had been previously, adorned the covers of national magazines. Although this comment is not intended to degrade the worthiness of these movements, the effective role of journalistic exaggeration is obvious. As such, the role of the word "explosion" cannot be downplayed.

A third major consequence,of the flood of information, or of the word "explosion", is a paradox of sorts. Because of the sensational information bombardment that the public has withstood in recent years,

there seems now to be an over-reaction taking place, that is, a dulling of America's senses. That which should shock the country out of its collective seat fails to arouse even a raised eyebrow; for a most overworked example, look at the state of affairs in the nation's capitol. The very fact that the most important officials, in the most important organ of government, in the most important country in the world could be suspected of felonious misdeeds should have been moral shock enough to send the Nixon family dog back to California with its tail between its legs, before the democrats "blew it" with Mr. McGovern. Public opinion, however, did not force the issue, and the fact that the same is now reversing itself does not weaken the contention. Public apathy has been too obvious for too long, and this, perhaps, is the greatest danger of the information explosion.

These, then, are the primary visible effects of the word "boom". It would be impossible to estimate to what degree American life has been affected by them, or at the same time to determine to what extent the effects have been harmful or beneficial. Certainly, such results as the fad movements benefit society, just as national apathy detracts from society. There are no definite answers.

It would seem, however, that there are ways we can improve. The emotionalism of sensational journalism, of the fad movements, and of social-political apathy, appears to be no longer beneficial. Instead, it is time for a more rational approach.

Waning Mist

Sandy Campbell



Our Fault

William Nesbitt

Quit passing the buck. "They" are not responsible for our troubles, we are. The turmoil that exists in America today is not "their" fault; it is our fault, we are to blame for it all.

Recently, our nation has been involved in war and plagued by a political storm, faced an energy crisis and a food shortage, and at the same time had our environment threatened. Now, we are in the midst of an economic crisis, a depression accompanied by inflation. Through it all we, the main stream of America, have saved face by blaming "them". It is time to stop; it is time to face the facts; it is time to place the blame where it belongs.

It was easy to blame the industrial-military complex for Viet Nam. Watergate was the fault of the politicians. Industry polluted our air and waters, while robbing us of our resources. Big business caused inflation. As quickly as a crisis develops, we invent a villian. How stupid we are!

Examine the past. In 1964 PT boats attacked an American naval vessel in neutral waters. The American public was up in arms. We demanded action. The President, conscious of public opinion; sent more of our military into Viet Nam. Congress, also aware of the public sentiment, supported the President's action. Enlistments into the armed forces increased; over-seas quotas were filled with volunteers. We'd teach those communists. A little war might be fun. Ten years later we were still at war. The fun was gone. Everyone hated the war. It was "their" fault. We blamed the military; the military blamed Congress; Congress blamed the President, and the President blamed his predecessor. It has even been said that the Gulf of Tonkin incident was staged, so as to provoke America. This may be true, but, in 1964 "we" didn't care. We did not search for the truth. We only cried for revenge.

For years Americans have demanded bigger and better cars, color televisions, time saving appliances, wonder fabrics, miracle drugs and full employment. Industry responded to "our" demands. We demanded more. Industry expanded to satisfy our ever growing "wants". We changed zoning laws, and lowered standards to entice industry to move into our cities. Then we had the nerve to blame "them" for filling our air with smog and our rivers with slop. We cursed General Motors, as we drove our smog producing monster a block to the store for cigarettes. Probably the greatest hypocrisy of all time is a bumper sticker that reads, "Get a Horse."

While industry destroyed our environment, we grew into a nation of two car families. The driveways of America became flooded with automobiles, so as to make room in our garages for snowmobiles, motorcycles, speed boats and motor homes. We replaced power mowers with garden tractors, and snow shovels with snow blowers. Then when the energy crisis hit, we blamed industry, industry blamed government, and the government blamed the Arabs.

For the past year we have been immersed in Watergate. That dirty rotten Nixon did it! Damn the Republicans! Talk to the man on the street, he never trusted "Tricky Dick". Yet, unbelievably, since we never trusted him, Richard M. Nixon was re-elected by the largest major-

ity in our nation's history. Even when the story of Watergate was first revealed, our initial reaction was "so what, didn't all the politicians do it?" No! No politicians were crooked until we allowed them to be. We expected "dirty politics", and they did not disappoint us.

It is unbelievable that the people of any nation could be so stupid. But, look at us. We created unions so that, united, we could demand and receive higher wages for less work. A year ago we were ready to strike for a four day work week at five days' pay. Now, today, we blame "them", the unions and big business, because the American dollar is inflated currency. Despite the fact that we were making more and more money, we still couldn't buy all that we wanted. So, we applied for Magicash, credit cards and charge accounts. It was great. We could spend more than we earned. It is now time to pay, the price is called recession, and it is their fault.

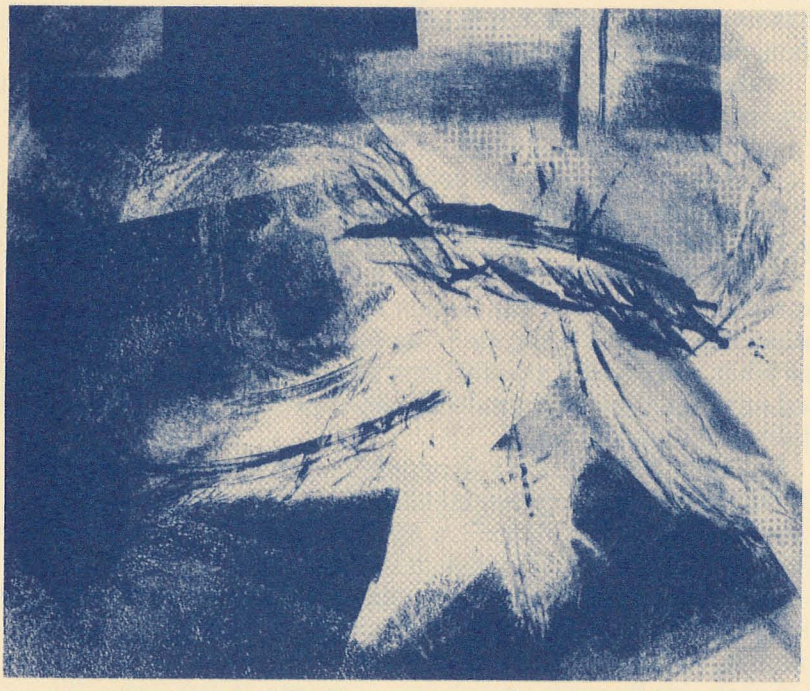
Wake up, Americans. Shoulder your share of the blame. We are here, where we are today, through our own fault. The problems that we face will not be resolved until we accept the total responsibility for them. America's problems were created for the people, of the people, and by the people. They can not be solved by the Government nor by industry, but, they can and must be solved by the people he never trusted "Tricky Dick". Yet, unbelievably, since we never trusted him, Richard M. Nixon was re-elected by the largest majority in our nation's history. Even when the story of Watergate was first revealed, our initial reaction was "so what, didn't all the politicians do it?" No! No politicians were crooked until we allowed them to be. We expected "dirty politics", and they did not disappoint us.

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Last Flight

Nancy Ketchen



Bruises

Janna Leigh Heltman

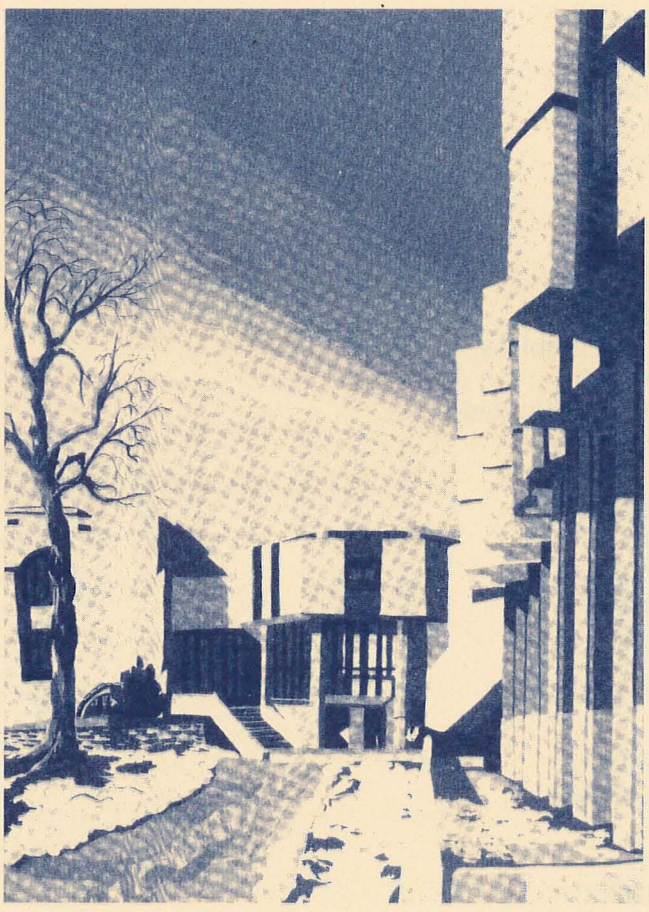
i sketch my men
in blacks
and blues;
make a stranger
of myself
by loving them.
merging
with the bronze
and ivory;
i am unfamiliar
with the goals
and justifications,
but materials
and methods
are the palm
of my hand,
the gist
of my ethics.
(i know murder,
large and limbless.
i know pain,
grueling and gutted.)
i sketch my men
in black
and blue conformity.
confront them
with their conquest,
watch their moves:
meticulous.
lavish.
insincere.
then flush
their contamination
from my otherwise
stable mind,
by filing them
with my portfolio
in sketches
of black
and blue.

First Place Art

Architectural Rendering

Kathy Gramer

64



1976 Eighteenth Edition

Six of One

Stephen Strobbe

Six prophets,
self-appointed,
stood on the rim of a Bowl
(a life across
and generations deep)

to analyse its contents.
speculate
philosophize

It was not solid, liquid or gas.
It had an indeterminable density
with no mass.
But there was a certain distant quality
of indefinable,
untouchable texture.

"Out of this all things are born
and to this all will return."

The second, bearded and bedraggled, snarled,
"It is the cesspool of humanity,
filled with all the black vileness
inherent in man's soul."

The third said smugly, "If it weren't for me,
neither would this (w)hole be."

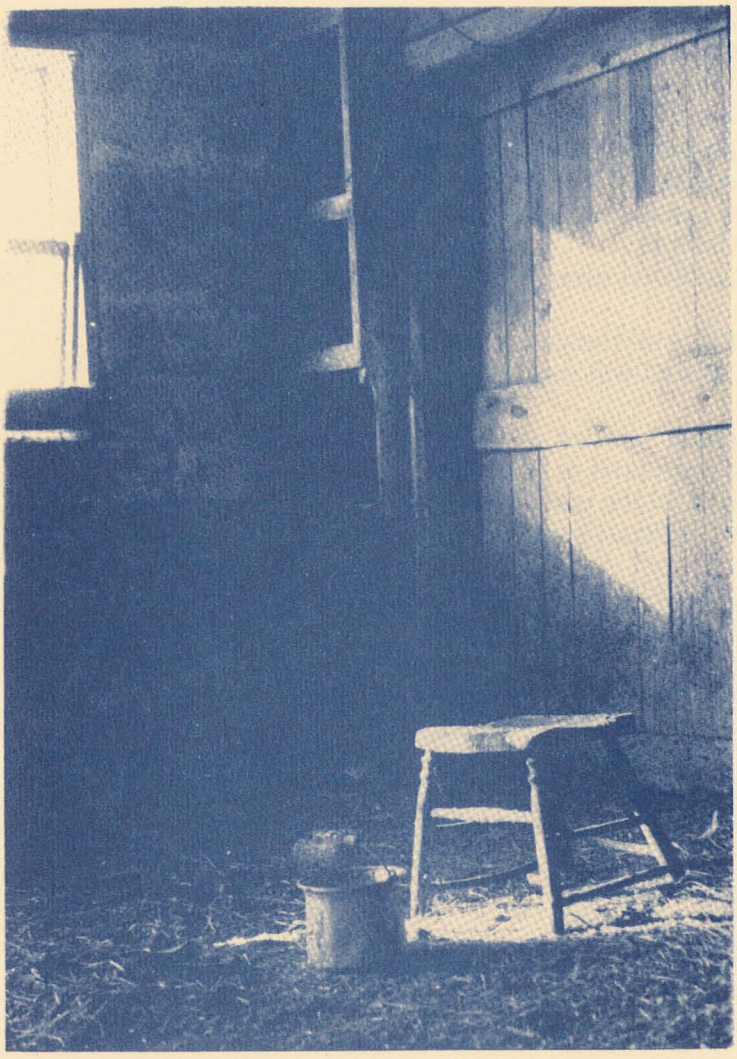
"It is Life, the Spirit to which we are akin."

The fifth broke into
laughtercrying,
"What could be more absurd?"

The sixth man said
"nothing"
and jumped in.

Untitled

Donald S. Taylor



First Place Poem

An Important Spoke

Stephen Strobbe

The man walked through the carnival alone.
Went because he felt some obligation
to at least attend the festivities.

Immersed in chaos.
Steeped in bright light.
The amoeba-mass poured through
tight-shouldered corridors,
with sand, paper-wrapper, and peanut-shell floors.
Cotton candy couples insisted on walking wide by wide.

He almost imagined himself an important spoke
on the largest ferris wheel.

He was indeed a-part.
He rode no rides,
nor did he stop his ears
against incessant, joyous screams of terror
that hung in the air,
hurled from cages and capsules overhead.

He tried no sure-loss games of skill,
but watched the players spit
out silver dollars for a prize.

Eyes tire
but he stayed.
Stayed because he knew
as soon as he left, he'd be sure to miss something

something good

a man falling from a high wire

or maybe a celestial dancer
handing him a very full balloon
and kissing away the bright red rouge on his cheeks.

Figure Study

Lonnie Gross



First Place Essay

Insight Reaped From *The Summer Before The Dark*

Nancy Gates

In her novel, *The Summer Before The Dark*, Doris Lessing defines and puts into words a woman's examination of herself and of her past. In my opinion, she wrote the novel on the hopes of reaching and comforting today's bewildered maturing women and letting them know they are not alone in their anger and anxiety. She points out many aspects of a woman's life and presents some of them as an incredible "joke."

Any woman can relate with the heroine's story. Lessing expresses that women are almost invisible before about age twelve and after age forty-five to men; they are taught (by their mothers?) to wear masks that conceal their real selves. Many women are depressed and do not know the reason, when actually they are not depressed, but angry. Lessing pinpoints that anger and gives reason for it.

When a woman "wakes up" after twenty years of raising a family, and examines herself, she many times finds that she has lost her real self and that she is a totally different person. This can be a frightening experience. "At one end of some long, totally involving experience steps a young, confident, courageous girl; at the other, a middle aged woman—herself," says Lessing. The long and totally involving experience Lessing speaks of is motherhood, a journey many of us have a drive to embark upon and then find an exasperating and futile experience, losing ourselves in the meanwhile. Lessing writes some impressive statements on this subject: "With three small children, and then four, she had to fight for qualities that had not been even in her vocabulary. Patience, Self-discipline, Self-control, Self-abnegation. Chastity. Adaptability to others - this above all. This always". . . "And as for being a sponge for small wants year after year". . . "Looking back from the condition of being an almost middle-aged wife and mother to her condition as a girl when she lived with just her husband, it seemed to her that she had acquired not virtues but a form of dementia". . . "She was like an old nurse who had given her years to the family and must now be put up with. The virtues had turned to vices, to the nagging and bullying of other people. An unafraid young creature had been turned, through the long, grinding process of always, always being at other people's beck and call, always having to give out attention to detail, minuscule wants, demands, needs, events, crises, into an obsessed maniac. Obsessed by what was totally unimportant." "That was how people changed; they didn't change themselves: you got changed by being made to live through something and then you found yourself changed." ". . . she had feared she was really crazy, she spent so much of her time angry."

Lessing bravely leads us on further and points out the outrageous double-standard society has put upon women. Women are first judged by their appearance (or "sexual attractiveness"). She illustrates this in her novel by a pre-teen and a middle-aged woman easily losing out on the attentions of a young man to a young, "attractive," woman. Lessing states, "Men's attention is stimulated by signals no more complicated than what leads the gosling; and for all her adult life, her sexual life, let's say from twelve onwards, she has been conforming, twitching like a puppet to those strings. . . ."

As Doris Lessing ingeniously presents an unfair, almost unchangeable problem of today's women, she gives us no solution. She does this extremely well with a conversation between the heroine (the forty-five year old) and a girl of twenty who is rebellious and refuses to live a life like the older woman's. The heroine wisely says to the girl, "Where I think you may be wrong is that you seem to be thinking that if you decide not to become one thing, the other thing you become has to be better." (the girl calls her mad. .) "Yes, I know it. And so you won't be. The best of luck to you. And what are you going to be instead?"

I, as the reader, reaped much knowledge from *The Summer Before The Dark.* The book gave me insight into my own feelings of anger and anxieties. Many women face feelings like this, not just me, alone. I learned that a lot of my anger is justified and not a sign that I am selfish or half mad (and thus provoking guilt feelings?) Yes, maybe that's what I reaped, or rather rid myself of-guilt. Thank-you, Doris Lessing.

Truman

Larry Dodge



1979 Twenty-first edition

To Sit Or Stand

Charles F. Lautner, Jr.

Growing up in a small town has its advantages and disadvantages at bath time. Bathing in a wash tub, because bathroom facilities were located beyond the bounds of our house, caused many agonizing moments in the process of growing up. It also began a feud with mother over the merits of taking a bath or taking a shower. The debate is important when one is deprived of a choice in the matter.

Mother's defense of baths were numerous. Her favorite was that while in the tub she could scrub and make sure one was squeaky clean. To her, tub baths warmed the body; tub baths covered private parts; tub baths were relaxing; tub baths allowed one to sit down; tub baths allowed her to check and drill the bather's ears out when dirty. Her forays upon the body with a soapy washcloth and a heavy hand made one wish for better methods.

Although our home didn't have a shower, the use of a little wit could gain access to one. This was done on many occasions, and the feel of hot water rushing over the body left one feeling clean. A shower relaxes the body; a shower massages the body; a shower carries the dirt away; a shower's water temperature stays constant; a shower uses less water than a bath, and the hair can be washed while in the shower. This information was relayed to mother, but she didn't believe the body could be cleaned without taking a hot bath.

Bathtimes were a test of patience and endurance. Water was carried from the well outside the house and heated on a wood stove. The bath tub was brought in (it was the laundry tub on wash days) and filled with hot water from the stove. Then mother gave the water the heat test, by immersing her elbow in the water to test its temperature. Mother's elbow could stand a lot of heat, but when a foot was stuck into the water, it was hastily extracted. The injured party yelled and could be seen dancing around on one foot and fanning the air with the other trying to cool it. This brought laughter from the brothers witnessing the ordeal, and vows of revenge could be heard from the bather cast in the direction of the spectators. Mother's command to enter the tub stopped the nonsense and the onslaught began. With washcloth in one hand, and soap in the other, she scrubbed the soiled bather. Every conceivable sound was emitted as the body felt the washcloth, under the heavy pressure of mother's hand. The skin felt like raw wood beneath an angry carpenter's sandpaper. When the dirt (and what felt like the top layer of skin) was washed away, the bather was allowed to rest awhile in the tub. The over-scrubbed boy sat in the tub watching floating bergs of soap suds, dingy gray and threatening to make an amphibious assault to regain their place on his flesh. The bather emerged from the tub feeling not much cleaner than before the bath. The young mind did not understand how one could get clean while sitting in dirty water.

While staying at a friend's house, the choice of a shower or bath was offered. Choosing a shower began a love affair with them that has lasted a lifetime. Standing in the shower's spray, a million tiny comets bombard the skin and bounce into space. To lather the body in deep suds and let the falling water wash it away, like an avalanche of snow down a mountainside, is pure pleasure. The dirty soap and water can

be seen going down the drain, creating a whirlpool as it exists to some unknown region. This cleaning leaves the skin feeling as fresh as morning dew. The water gently stings the face when directly in the spray. It then caresses the neck, arms, torso and legs on its journey to the drain. Standing in a shower is being in a beautiful warm fog. Hearing the swish and feeling the sensation of falling water seduces the body into complete relaxation. A beckoning shower is a gentle seducer.

The debate with mother over bathing or showering went on. Showering proved that one could get clean without being immersed in water to the neck. Upon moving to a house that had a shower, the problem resolved itself. After showering and a close inspection of the body by mother, especially the ears, she concluded that maybe showering wasn't the worst method of getting clean. To this day, she insists on her tub bath, but her son revels in the spray of a steaming shower.

Bird Watchers

Anne Kennedy



Firefly Ring

R. Brueggeman

Some events or instances in life seem to be frozen in ice; preserved in every detail, one can turn them over, prod and pry. Sometimes these instances are totally unremarkable. More often, the ice of these moments is tension.

. . . Glaring in his eyes, so he sat up and shielded his face. Looking out across the corn, he could see a plume of dust crawl up Laurel road. The plume rounded the corner a half mile off; pushing an old car in front of it. The corn whispered and shook as the car blew by.

Finally, the wave of dust crested, spewing the car into the yard. The car discharged a fat woman with a wide, smooth face.

"Where is your Mama?" asked the woman.

"Doin' washin," answered the boy as he backed away, because the woman was angry—steaming, sweating, knife-in-the-back angry—and, oh Lord and Holy Jesus, she was going to hit him and—

"Michael !"

"Yeah Mom!?"

"Get your little butt down to the swing."

"Yes Mom," he said, and did go, or at least as far as the corner of the house.

There he stopped and slipped a look back. The fat woman and his Mom stood in the yard and yelled, at least the fat woman did. Mom just gazed back, flat eyes yellow and rather soon things changed. The fat woman stopped howling and started quivering. Finally she sobbed and shook back to her car.

The car drove away, sunlight winking on the grill at Mike as it passed. Mike didn't watch the car go, though. No, Mike watched his Mom because

Mike was an awkward thirteen when he spoke of his mother. The man who was his father looked through the boy as he spoke, and the boy looked through the man. The boy saw fairness and understanding, fight and resentment in the man. In the boy the man saw only a question,

After the man finished speaking of the boy's mother, the boy sat still.

That night the boy went to the phone and called his mother and planned a visit

At the terminal he stepped off the bus and saw his mother right away. She was smaller than he remembered, or so it seemed. Her features were sharp, her skin worn. She was a rock of weathered stone.

"Come on, Michael," said the Stone.

Michael and his mother sat on the porch. Light drained from the sky, blue to pink to red. Fireflies became visible, flashing off rhythm.

"I've gone my own way," said the woman. "I ask no forgiveness, and I offer no apologies."

"Understand this, Michael," she commanded the boy, who was watching fireflies dance, "a hell of a lot of people let their lives flow by, or just go with the current. Some times you fight the current just to be really alive."

Michael reached out and snatched a firefly off the black velvet

night. From it, he made a ring and wrapped it around his finger.

"Those times are lonely," furnished the woman, but the boy and the ring just glowed coldly.

The young man sat in the mid-day July heat and stared at the old house where he had lived when he was a little kid. The house was scarred and faded, faded as the memory of his mother watching an old car drive off

. . . Because he had never seen his mother cry, no matter how mean or tight times got. Yet there she was crying as she walked to the house. . . .

The young man thought of how lonely she had looked. Not beaten—hell no. Alone though, and sad. Finally, the boy, now a young man, understood why his mother had cried that day.

He also understood why she left with the woman's husband a few days later, leaving her husband and son behind. To be alive.

To be alive.

The image in the ice isn't always clear, however. Even held up to the light of understanding, the memory can be blurred in places. Only time and old wounds healed can clear the view.

First Place Art

Landscape '81

Irene Murphy



Abacus

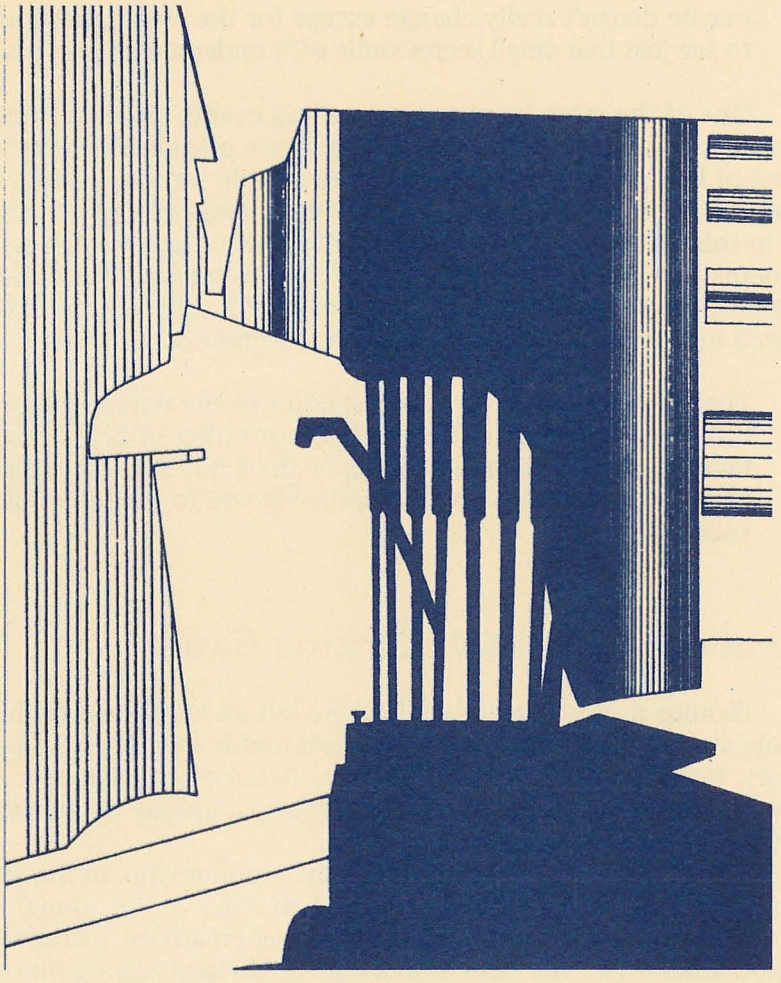
Mark Buckley

Simple lines born into a complex system.
Numbers of men flow on.
No longer does one plus one equal two.
But rather reverts back to one.
Negatives and positives
Numerators and denominators
All equal more calculations.
While society slides across
Parallel wires to the inevitable
Conclusion.

First Place Art

Basement Design No. 1

Paul Manz



Eleanor B. Mathews

April 28, 1913–June 4, 1982

She inspired others to learn: she kindled frustration into anticipation, hesitancy into expectancy, and self-doubt into self-worth. She inspired many by her teaching, her writing, and her living. The 1978 dedication of *Patterns* praised Eleanor Mathews for her ability to encourage students "to seek a more sensitive and appreciative response to learning." In an earlier Erie Square Gazette feature entitled "Eleanor Mathews-A Touch of Class," her own words testified to her perceptive pattern of teaching:

> It's very possible standing in front of a class to see a face that maybe doesn't really change except for the eyes lighting up or to see just that small secret smile of "I understand," and it's great.

One of the more inspiring, rewarding events of her retirement occurred February 24, 1982, when Eleanor was presented in an evening reading of her own poetry. In her own inimitable way, she expressed her appreciation for the "gift" of that evening [editor's note: see Afterword in this volume]. The 24th edition of *Patterns* presented a few of her poems as a special remembrance gift of a remarkable and unique woman for students and friends. The words of Kahlil Gibran on the teacher's influence exemplify well this one woman's rare talent:

> The teacher who walks in the shadow of the temple, among his followers, gives not of his wisdom but rather of his faith and his lovingness. If he is indeed wise, he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind.

Eleanor B. Mathews Writing Award

Eleanor B. Mathews' death in 1982 left an emptiness in the lives of many students, colleagues, friends, and family members. In her memory, beginning with the 25th edition, *Patterns* established a living legacy, the Eleanor B. Mathews Writing Award, a unique connection for family and friends in her memory.

The monetary award is given to the student who, in the estimation of the English faculty, has submitted an entry to the annual *Patterns* competition, which exhibits outstanding creativity, technical skill, and individual style. The cash award may be divided among more than one recipient. Over the years, it has become customary to assign the Mathews Award to the student who shows creative excellence in more than one genre and/or whose work has merited publication in more than one edition of *Patterns.*

First Words

Stephen Strobbe

81

I have no new words to give. These
primal utterances are old as underearth
stones grating their definitions
against brotherstones, water breaking
itself in trickles on the waiting
rock, old as the cry of motherbirds

screaming after the lost egg. Woman,
these are the only sounds I can lay
claim to, mouthing first primitive
elongated vowels, messages from the human
muteheart, when nightskies trembled
in thunderous love and fear: hold me.

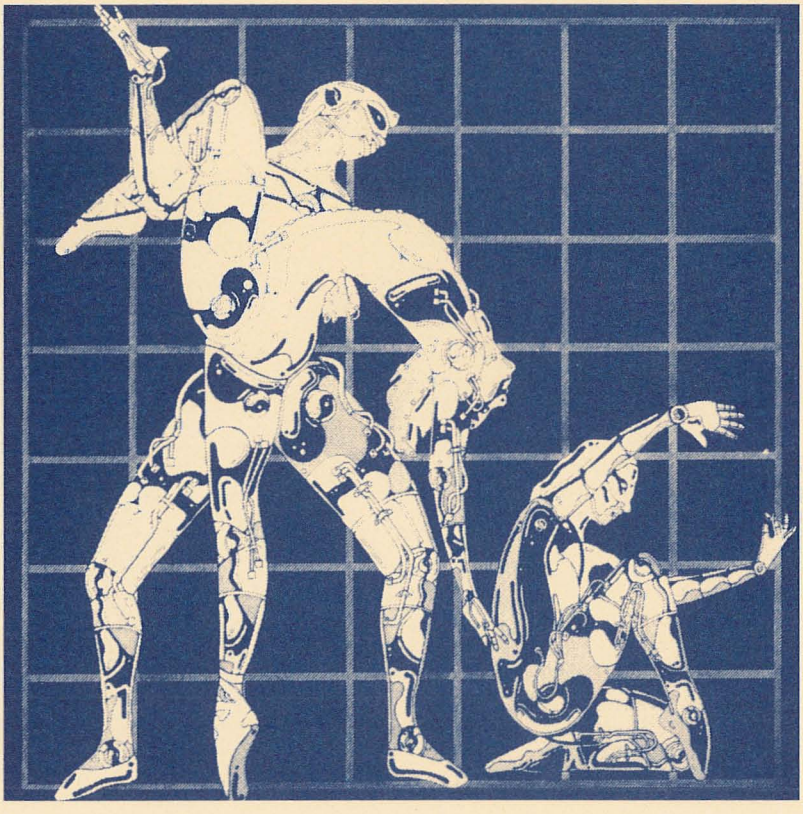
1983 Twenty-fifth Edition

First Place Art

Mechanical People

Barb Gorko

89



1983 Twenty-Fifth Edition

First Place Poem

The Rain Watcher

Steve Gardner

Centered in a storm he walked slowly
Under shrouded sounds of rhythmic rain,
Watched a pale pattern of weighted clouds
Stroll through the gray towards tomorrow,
Drew over his eyes his aching hands,
Sore from clinging so long to despair.

Close to a corner he smelled lemons,
Remembered the dear prose by Thomas
That he could understand; believed;
Knew there was room in those dominions
Of the seas, hills, nights, symbols and dreams,
To share the inner world of moonlit grass.

Darkness lulled itself behind his ears,
Rain turned to fog and whispered the sound
To submit to weakness and sadness;
Although, time would kill before he learned
That just hope would with time destroy him,
If he listened to all of his doubts.

And it began to rain, hard, again,
From his eyes his hands were pushed away,
He saw time before him as poison,
Instead chose to drink from former rains,
With his aching hands cling to his dream,
Run home and become the rain watcher.

First Place Art

North Star Sails

Drew Pascoots

84



1984 Twenty-sixth Edition

First Place Essay

Life After Kids

Colleen Baron

A major turning-point in parents' lives occurs when all the children have left home. It is said to be a traumatic time. We had heard and read so much about the "empty-nest syndrome;" would we fall victims to the ailment? Everywhere we went, friends complained vociferously about how lonely and dull their lives were since their precious babies had left home. Some even went so far as to say that now they'd just sit and look at each other because there is no longer anything to talk about.

We were flabbergasted. It was beyond our comprehension that life after kids was so devasting, especially when we were in the process of coping with the antics of three normal, active teenagers. Frankly we were looking forward to the time when we'd be free of all the hassle. We dream of the days when our telephone receivers didn't appear to be a part of the kids' heads, the gas tank of the car wouldn't always be empty and we could actually get into one of our two bathrooms when we wished.

We learned in a hurry that it wasn't acceptable to mention that we eagerly looked forward to the day when our beloved offspring were out on their own. Folks responded to us, not only with raised eyebrows, but with absolute horror. What kind of monsters were we? How could we ever say, much less think, such a terrible thing? After all, life without the children around was empty and meaningless. They predicted that someday we'd regret our evil thoughts. We always looked at each other and shook our heads in disbelief. Were these the same people who were tearing their hair out a few short years before because sons were drinking or staying out too late, and daughters were skipping school or dating boys that Mom and Dad couldn't stand? How soon they forget.

Our attitude towards the empty-nest phase was formulated many years ago when our kids were small. During a sermon in church, the priest mentioned that our children aren't given to us, they are loaned to us by God. In essence, we merely guide them through childhood to maturity and then our job is done. When they all leave, it would be time for us as a couple again. It was a beautiful thought, so we looked forward to a supposedly difficult adjustment period with a positive attitude.

We enjoyed our children tremendously. Not that things always went smoothly. We had as many problems and upsets as any other family, but the good times far outweighed the bad. Family life was important to us, and even though we did most things as a group, we made sure that there was time for just my husband and me. We were a couple in the beginning and we realized there would be just two of us again later on. We never relinquished our rights and needs as a twosome or as individuals.

Within a two year span, all three children married and left home. Two of them within a four month time period. We went from chaos to quiet in a hurry. It was a radical change. Here it comes, we thought. Will we or won't we experience the empty nest syndrome? It never happened.

For the first year we and the kids viewed our new freedom as a second honeymoon. Our youngest daughter, who has an avid sense of humor, sent her letters to us addressed to the "Newlywed Barons." The mailman must have thought she'd flipped out. The "just-married" novelty has worn off, but the magic in our relationship has not. It's really much better than being newlyweds, because we don't have all those big adjustments to make. We understand and are tolerant of each other's foibles. We accept and overlook habits that used to drive us nuts. All the stresses and strains, that are so much a part of building a life together, are light years behind us.

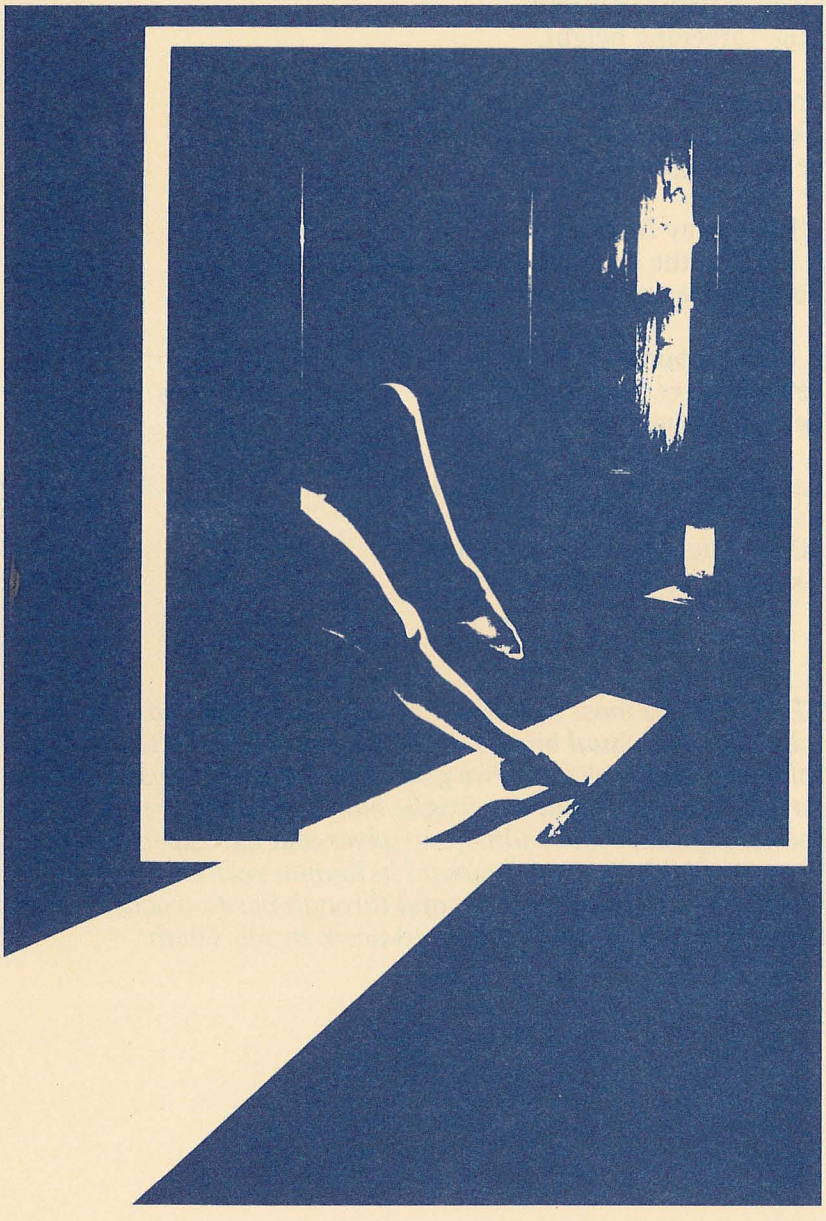
This turning point in our lives brought joy and happiness far beyond our expectations. It's been a time of renewal and discovery. We never lament that we have nothing to say to each other. We talk incessantly, and there's no one to interrupt and distract us. We have more time together now than we had the previous 25 years, but it seems like it's never enough. We're closer to each other now than at any other time in our marriage. A love, that we thought had reached its pinnacle long ago, has been growing at an astronomical rate.

Do we ever miss the kids? Once in a while. Would we want them back? No way. Would we like to turn back the clock? Under no circumstances. We enjoy our children's company, now, as equals—as adults who are free and independent. We believe the feelings are mutual. We are blessed. God gave us enough common sense to choose how we wanted to view life "after kids" and the wisdom to prepare for it with happy, positive anticipation. The last few years have been the best years of our marriage.

First Place Art

Legs

Robert L. Mack



1985 Twenty-seventh Edition

Christa McAuliffe

Roberta Lueth

"I touch the future; I teach." -- Christa McAuliffe

As we leave a trail of billowing white
In the crystal brilliance of this fair blue day,
Above the ocean's deeper blue expanse,
Our way is flame and roar,
Rolling, careening height.

My soul exalted by the magic flight,
Thinking even now of all that I will say,
I give no thought to death.

We thrust away from earth,
Rise, lift into the unfolding bright future,
A prolonged, ascending thunder.

High on my hopes, I hold my breath.
It seems forever we are climbing,
A silent, rending sigh.

Ten miles below my children watch
In wonder and awe
As all our cherished dreams explode
Across the cruel and scattering sky.

NOTE: One of the most significant events of the past year was the nationally televised visual impact of the explosive destruction of dreams and the stunning realization we gained of the limitations of both our imperfect technology and our fragile humanity. We learned once more the need to question the truth of ourselves and our expectations and to value more highly the beauty found in human relationships. As a special tribute to Christa McAuliffe, and through her to teachers and their students everywhere, we present this poem by Ms. Lueth.

Untitled

Pam Ridner



The Moose Dilemma

Cheryl Lorence

One day while shopping I saw "him." I had no money with me; I was just browsing around the mall with a friend. I began "people watching: a popular sport at such places, when I was rudely shoved into a nearby store by a throng of people passing by.

It was fate. I backed straight into a rack and on it was a forest-green sweater. This was no ordinary sweater because staring back at me was the silhouette of a big moose. It was love at first sight, for both of us, and once I saw that he had a matching skirt with miniature replicas of himself scattered along it, I knew I had to have that outfit. I even went so far as to envision the spot I would hang him in my closet.

After selecting the correct size, I grabbed him off the rack and rushed up to the cash register. As I took out my wallet to pay, I realized I did not have any money with me. In my excitement I had forgotten. I was crushed, not to mention red with embarrassment.

I apologized to the cashier; then, chin lowered and spirits broken, I took my moose outfit back to his former place on the rack. All the fun had gone out of the trip, so my friend and I went home. I was determined to return and claim that moose for my own. The next weekend I had scraped together enough money to accomplish my goal. I set out for the mall with a couple of friends to "hunt down" my moose.

When we arrived it was a mad dash to the store which was holding my moose captive. I looked on the rack where my moose had previously been located. When he was not there, I began to panic. I searched frantically. I flew from rack to rack with not a trace of my moose anywhere. By now I was near hysterics. My friends managed to calm me down enough to ask a salesperson about my missing moose.

I was soon informed that my moose had been on sale during the past week. It seems the moose combinations were very popular. If there were not any left on the racks, then they were all gone. My heart fell into my socks. I was devastated! Still, I would not give up. Even if I had to search every rack once more with a fine tooth comb, I would find my moose.

Forty minutes and fifteen racks later, my friends gave up on me and went to do some more shopping. Still, my search went on. I just knew he had to be there somewhere. We were destined for one another. Customers came and went without a second look from me. I had been through every rack, twice. My moose was gone for good. I was ready to burst into tears. Then "she" walked in. At first I did not notice her;she walked straight to the return counter and out of the corner of my eye I saw... my moose! Joy of joys. I ran over to the counter, tripping over my feet in my haste. People began to stare; I did not care. I pushed my way through a small group of people. It was laid out on the counter and it was all there. My moose sweater and the skirt to match. I held my breath as I checked the size. Did I come all this way to find it would be too small? No! It was too good to be true; my size. Quickly I whipped out the correct amount of bills and placed them on the counter.

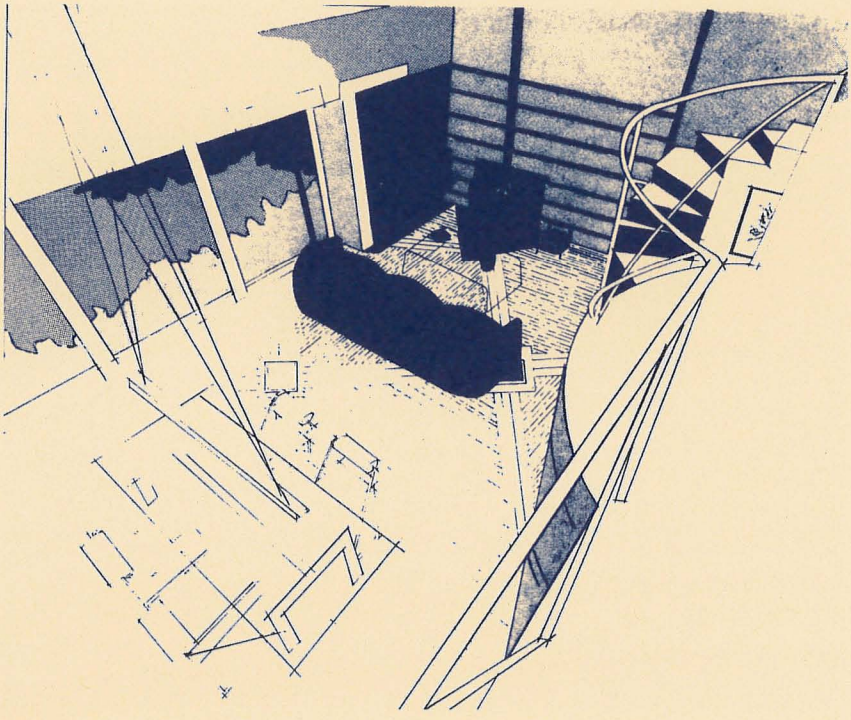
Every salesperson in the store that day applauded as my new purchase was handed to me. They were finally getting rid of me.

I was ecstatic. My moose and I were reunited at last. I met my

friends at the car. We went out for a fine dinner at McDonald's to celebrate. Then I took my moose home to his reserved spot in my closet. We are now living together in mutual adoration. We have a good working relationship.

From the Artist's Eye

Carolyn Klause



First Place Essay

The Last Good-Bye

Tia Garcia

All of life has an inherent rhythm. There is an ebb and flow that is both seen and felt with the heart. We sow crops and reap the harvest; the smallest of acorns may yield the mightiest oak. A child is nurtured and raised on love, thereby, blossoming into her fullest potential. Love is the greatest power; love is the greatest gift. The budding of love develops into a full bloom, and similar to a spent spring bouquet, love becomes a cherished memory.

It has been said that there is only one loss: the first loss. All other losses are but the first one relived. Death of a loved one is always traumatic. The death of my grandmother, who raised me as her own child, who loved me unconditionally - her death was my greatest loss.

"Aggie" was my first word, and rightly given to the first love of my life. She was the nurturer through illness, confidante during affairs of the heart, and a wonderful playmate. Aggie patched me up when I was hurt, laughed with my joys, and hugged my soul when I felt blue. She spoke her love in countless ways. I wondered what she could say to me on this day, and if I would be able to understand. Ravaged by illness, she was too weak to speak; the power of love was our sole communicator. On this clammy, grey, wintry, lifeless day, we said our last good-bye.

Just as loving hands had eased her into this world, she would be held and comforted in death. We all knew that she had come home with a purpose. Aggie did not want to face death in a sterile hospital room. She would not be alone.

The final day is frozen into memory. I realized sleep had overcome me. My unforgiving back groaned and creaked as I arched to attention. Shaking away the aching drowsiness, my eyes were riveted back to the frail, lifeless form on the bed. Except for the relentless sound of hissing oxygen, the house slumbered and was still. There was a sense of knowing the end was near. I would not sleep again; time was too precious for dreaming. We were alone, for the stream of visitors had dwindled over the last few days. This was our private time. I urgently memorized every detail about her: the white wisps of thinning hair, the translucent skin, deep azure eyes, and the furrowed valleys that life had etched on her face. I could not forget her: not now, not ever.

It felt strange that the old familiar roles were reversed. I tucked in the blankets and fluffed the pillows as best I could. Replacing cold compresses and rubbing on lotion, I communicated my love for her with silent actions. Memories and emotions flooded my soul. Perhaps she could not hear me, but I talked to her. I laughed alone in the spots we used to laugh at together. Her hands no longer squeezed mine with punctuation. I cried tears of despair. It was strange not to share giggles over stories of her girlish foolishness. She amazed me with her pioneer spirit. Aggie inspired me with her determination to make this world a better place. There would be no more afternoon teas, card games, baking cookies, or reliving the richly woven stories of my heritage.

The shadows began flickering through the room. The moon pierced between the branches, casting leaf-figures on the wall. I no longer knew what time it was. My clothes and hair were stiff and rumpled.

I dared not leave, time was running out. The death clock kept up its relentless ticking.

"Oh, when did you become so old?" I thought. Life has always included you. You held me when I cried, stroked my hair, and murmured sweet lullabies. Now and forever she would not be able to hug me. Aggie was more than a grandmother; she was my confidante and my trusted friend. She was slipping away. My heart ached, as I knew I had to go on. The upswelling grief tasted bitter in my mouth.

I grieved for my selfish loss. The last few years had been busy with my own child. All too often there had been a brief visit or a quick telephone call. Aggie would say, "Come over when you have some time. '" wondered where I had lost track of all that time and felt overwhelmed with regret.

I decided at that moment that her family would continue to know this wonderful human being. Her memory would be a rich inheritance to generations still unborn. As Aggie bridged the past, so shall I. Her girlish stories, her laughter, and tragedies would live on. Aggie lived expressing her total, unconditional love; her love was the ultimate gift.

I murmured to her, "Go in peace. I love you," over and over again. As I held her, and rocked her, and loved her with all my heart, she took in one last sucking breath. Like a clock with a broken pendulum, life froze into eternity. She was gone.

First Place Art

Empty Spirits

Scott Markel

95



1988 Thirtieth Edition

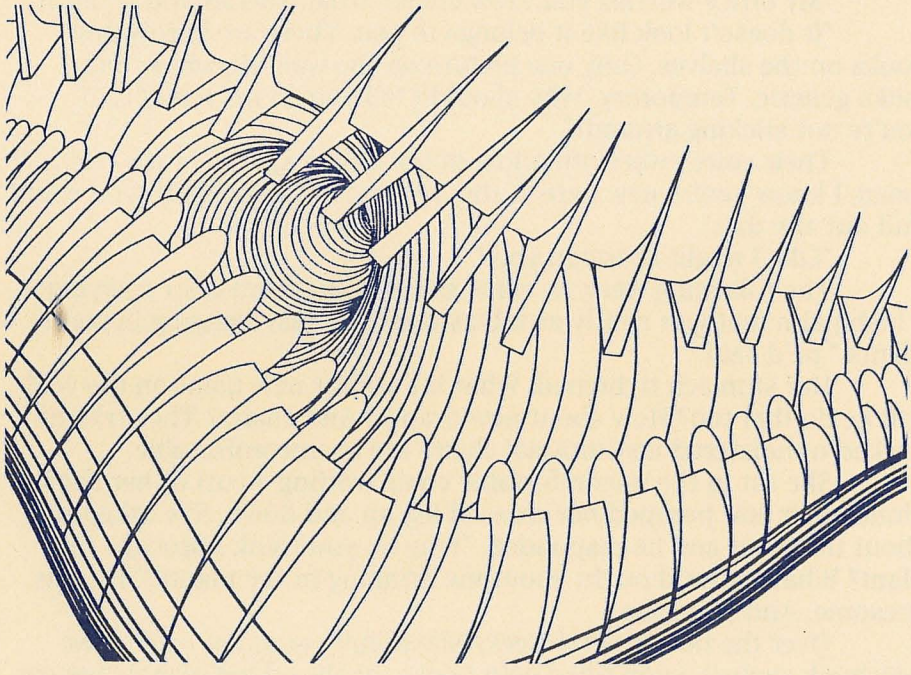
Two Innocents

Ruth Peuler

My catalogue companion of
painted permanent cheer.
An impudent naked cherub
A virgin martyr,
So witlessly dear
So absent of tear.
She lies in sandhill
infested, damp and unaffected.
I, no malicious molester
Execute mutilation for
unperpetrated err.
I dispose of her dimpled limbs
to view her barren hull within
Exposing portholes, unlatched
Vulnerable to my wordless wonderings.
I envision her a wonderlust
laden her with gravel dust
To launch her leeward
over and amongst the weeds
To lie shipwrecked
My victim
My friend
My doll.

The Beginning

Jason Gamache



The Couch

Diane Ramey

Melanie didn't like men, didn't trust them. Thirty five years of knowing her father had honed her distrust. But she had been in therapy with a man, Dr. John Elliot Robertson, for over a year. She called him Dr. Robertson; he called her Ms. Hoskins. Very professional. She'd heard the other therapists called him John.

She couldn't call him John. She couldn't even look at him most of the time. If she did, she might decide to trust him. Besides, if she let him see her eyes, he might see something she didn't want to reveal.

It hadn't been Melanie's idea to see a man. Her previous therapist, a female, had recommended it. Maybe she shouldn't trust women either.

She sat in his waiting room now, heard the front door open and remembered a session last February, eleven months ago.

"Your office... There's something wrong. It worries me."

"My office worries you. How come? What worries you about it?"

"It doesn't look like it belongs to you. There are hardly any books on the shelves. Only one picture on the wall the whole thing looks generic. Temporary. Why should I tell you all my troubles if you're not sticking around?"

Their voices were often lost in the empty spaces of the room. "I mean, I know you're new here at this agency, but it feels like you could pull out any day."

"Like I might abandon you?"

The following week he came through the front door carrying a lush palm that was nearly as tall as himself. "Just bringing in some plants," he'd said.

Her stomach tightened. What if I ask for new paint on the walls, will he do that too? How about new drapes! And chairs? The straight-backed upholstered institutional chairs are so uncomfortable.

She sat in the uncomfortable chair twirling a curl of her short blonde hair and pumped her crossed leg up and down. She asked him about the plant and he responded, "Why do you think I brought in a plant? What's your thought about my bringing in the plants?" He was tiresome. And irritating.

Over the next several weeks she didn't comment on the two new book shelves, soon filled with books, or the added plants, one on eitherside of the desk. She pretended to ignore it when he hung a Van Gogh print on the wall.

Her thoughts traveled a meandering road that often doubled back on itself. He really hears me! He responds to the things I say. Sure.

He is only manipulating. Doing his job. He can't shrink you if you don't trust him. This voice sounded more familiar, more sturdy than the one excited by his responses.

She sat outside his office for her third appointment of the week, waiting for the previous patient to exit. Maybe today Dr. Robertson would tell her he was tired of the struggle. "I'm referring you to another therapist. You don't trust me and I see no point in dragging this out any further, " he'd say.

But the previous patient emerged from a different door, fol-

lowed soon after by Dr. Robertson. His slender impeccably dressed frame glided briskly toward her.

"My office is being painted so we'll use a different one."

Only a part of Melanie noticed this office had soft comfortable upholstered easy chairs. She wasn't serious when she suggested, "We ought to trade chairs with the occupant of this office." As usual, he made no comment but sat across from her placidly, his ankle at his knee.

At her next session he spoke to her as she rose to enter his office. "Things are changed around a little bit." He'd never said more than, "Hello, come on in," while outside the office before. She was prepared for something but not this. There was a couch in his office The uncomfortable chairs she had complained about were gone.

Melanie walked across the room. "A couch!" She kept her voice casually surprised but couldn't stop the smile from breaking through and taking over her face. She turned her head to look at Dr. Robertson. The room brightened with his smile and a warmth spread through her that she hadn't felt before.

"What is happening? What are you thinking?" he asked. The words came out slowly and softly as though he must hold his breath or he would laugh aloud and join in her surprise and pleasure, instead of remaining professional and uninvolved.

"What do you mean, what's happening!?" she asked. But he did not elaborate.

Her eyes darted about as she searched for an answer. The room gently vibrated. He seems happy, she thought, as though he's bought me the birthday present I've always wanted.

"You didn't do this because I complained, did you?"

"What's your thought about why?"

"You drive me crazy with that phrase!"

He was silent again with the assurance born of the irritation of many patients who did not at first like what was good for them but made progress anyway.

"I know you didn't do this just for me, but it feels like you did. You acted really happy about my surprise." She paused. "Other people must have complained too. That's it. Others complained. The chairs were uncomfortable. So you replaced them. It's just that simple."

She sat tensely on the couch, her feelings tumbling inside her as if they were gymnasts clutched together to form a wheel, rolling over and over. Negative thought, positive thought, first one on top, then the other. He seems happy I'm pleased.

Of course he's happy. He needs you to trust him so that he can do his job. He's a shrink and shrinks can't shrink without trust.

But it feels so good that something I said made an impact on a person. He heard me!

Of course he heard you. That's his job.

He finally admitted what she'd said was true. "You're right. Many patients complained about the chairs being uncomfortable, and the couch became available so...."

But the birthday present feeling wouldn't go away.

At the end of the session he stretched releasing the tension of the hour, his arms reaching up, then down to his toes as he sat in his chair.

He looked up at her and smiled. There was a moment of pure, pristine clarity. She smiled back at him. Then the icy chill of fear reached inside her and she looked away.

Every session after that, immediately upon entering his office she looked for her couch. If it was there, she was safe.

The couch itself was unremarkable. A plain brown couch. The same color as her father's chair. The one he sat in with Melanie on his lap. The one in her basement, broken down now after thirty years.

Slowly, over the next few months Dr. Robertson office changed. Soft champagne carpeting was installed. His chair was replaced by two new ones, caramel-colored leather.

She felt more kindly toward Dr. Robertson than before the advent of the couch, but he was still man.

"What do you find yourself thinking?" he asked in one of her many silent moments.

"I don't know." she answered, knowing. but not wanting to reveal her thoughts.

"You don't tell me things," he complained, his voice accenting the 'tell' and rising on 'things' as if to, say, "How can I help you if you won't cooperate?'

She thought of all the very difficult things she had told him and was upset that he did not appreciate her effort.

She warned him the day the new chairs arrived. "If this couch is gone, I'll be upset," she said. "It's important to me." He had heard her before and he would hear her again.

She sat in the waiting room and thought about the dream she had talked about last week; they had not finished interpreting it. She looked up as he opened his office door, smiled and said, "Come on back." She rose and walked inside. The couch wasn't there.

A new couch was ensconced in the space where her couch had been. It was beautiful, the same leather as the two new chairs. Its large billowing cushions invited her to relax into them, to rest there. But she did not feel invited. The muscles in her legs strained to stop even as they moved forward. A hole opened in her chest exposing her delicate interior to harsh cold air. . . .

She sat on the couch though her mind screamed, "I don't want to sit on it" She felt her skin wrap itself more tightly to her bones to avoid touching this betrayal.

She sat with one arm cradling her middle, the other held stiffly with her hand under her chin. She tried to hold her mind still, keep it from spinning out on this slippery emotional pavement. "I want to talk about the dream I had last week. We never finished interpreting it."

She sensed his head move slightly to the side and his brows knit with curiosity. He said softly, "Why do you want to talk about the dream instead of what is happening right now?"

"There is nothing happening. And we haven't finished the dream."

"What do you mean, there is nothing happening?"

She hesitated, took a breath and opened her mouth to speak, then closed it again. He knows how I feel.

Finally she blurted, "You have a new couch."

"Um hm." He waited.

"I told you two weeks ago if the couch was not here, I would be upset. I am upset!"

"What is upsetting about that?"

"What is upsetting about that!" She looked up at him, her mouth open, her eyebrows raised. She sat in the same rigid position moving her hand only to cover her now closed mouth, then move it back to her chin. She couldn't talk.

"What is upsetting about that?" he repeated.

Again she opened her mouth, took a breath to speak, but nothing came out. She shook her head and looked back at her knees.

"Why did you do this? Why did you do this?" Her voice rose. Her mind raced while she sat huddled on this new couch. He knew all along I would be upset. He finds out what is important to me and pulls it away. Then sits back to watch me squirm like a bug on a stick. I knew it was too good to be true.

"Do what? What did I do?" He sounded irritated.

"I told you two weeks ago the couch was important. You should have let me know you were getting a new one."

"I'm not following you."

"You should have let me know," she said through clenched teeth.

"Why should I have let you know?" the words were said in the same way he might have said, "What's the big deal?"

Her jaw was tight as she spit out, "I'm not talking. I am not talking!"

He raised himself on his elbows and shifted in his chair. He said simply," Why?"

"Because you are not hearing me."

He softened as he gently asked, "Tell me what I'm not hearing."

She glanced up at him. His eyes were on her as though staring hard enough would make him understand.

"Things are important. More important than people. Things last a long time. There is furniture in museums that is two hundred years old. The people who made it and used it are gone, but the furniture is still there."

"You gave me that couch. I mean, I know you didn't give it just to me, but it felt like you gave it to me. You knew I would like the couch. You could hardly keep from laughing aloud with me when I saw it in your office that day. Now it's gone."

They were both silent. .

Doubts crept in. But it was only a couch. Just an inanimate object. He did actually bring it in. He did almost laugh with me. He did smile at me warmly at the end of the session. The couch's absence does

not change that.

She took a deep breath, drawing strength from the air in her lungs. But I told him it was important! She looked up at him. "Why didn't you tell me you were getting rid of it?" She paused, allowing the lump in her throat to subside then looked at him and repeated, "Why didn't you tell me?"

He looked at her a moment before answering. His elbow was on the arm of the chair, his head resting on his chin. "I didn't know it would be important to you. I remember now, you talked about it, but it was mixed in with other thoughts and didn't seem as important as it does now."

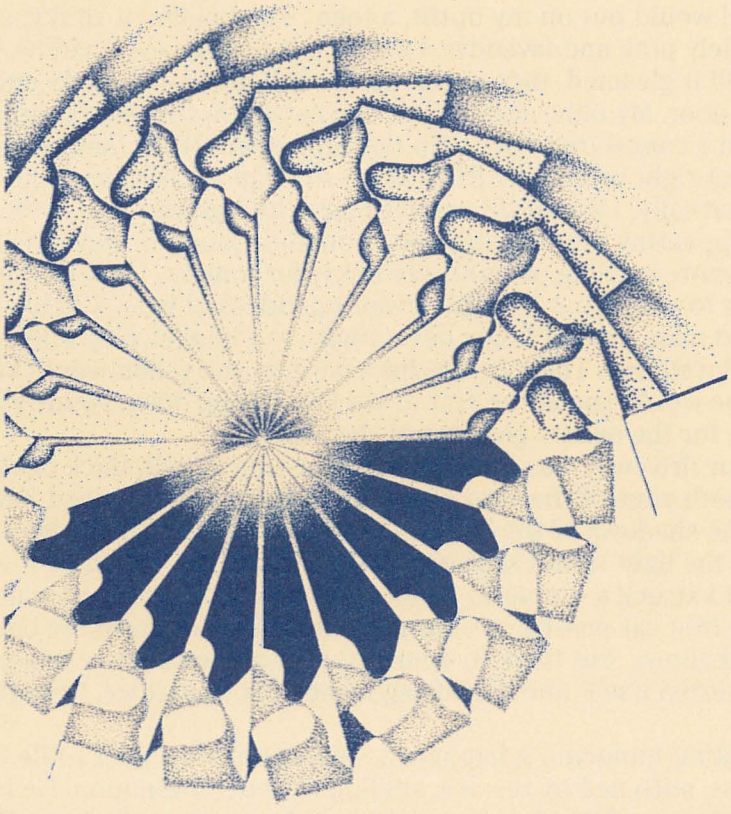
Relief flooded through her like a spring rain washing away the refuse of winter. He didn't know. He wasn't watching her squirm.

She felt her body relax letting her feel this new couch. The cushions, warmed by her touch, held her gently. Her head rested on the soft high back and instead of always staring at her knees, she was looking up. She placed her arm on its smooth caramel-colored leather arm and felt the support it offered.

First Place Art

Cover Design

Brad Herbert



The Beauty Goddess of the Night Gets Caught

Sarah Faulkner

I peered into the mirror critically. At fourteen years old, I had accepted the reality that I was not beautiful. I was chubby. I had long, thick, dull brown hair. I had very thick glasses, behind which my eyes receded into tiny pigmy eyes. But behind this disappointing exterior was an IMAGINATION. It saved me from mediocrity and despair. It filled my life with excitement and drama.

It made me beautiful.

I was enough of a realist to know that I couldn't be beautiful just any time. But I had worked out a formula. At night, when it was dark, I could be as beautiful as I wanted because nobody could see me, so I would stodge through each day until nightfall when I would release my imagination and enjoy being beautiful.

I had a routine. At eleven or midnight, long after the family was sleeping, I would put on my outfit, a toga , I had made of slinky, shiny fabric, palely pink and lavender. I would put on blue eye shadow, brush my hair till it gleamed, then sneak up the hall, down the stairs and out the front door. My older sister slept downstairs in the back bedroom, which had a connecting door with the front spare room, and that room opened out right beside the front door, so I had to creep very quietly.

Normally, I would flit mysteriously through the yards, dodging cars, disappearing into the shadows. Tonight's jaunt, however, would be much more exciting, delightfully risky, for tonight, I had decided, I was going to stop a car. Tonight, I was a goddess of beauty, and some poor, tired man, driving home late a night, would glance up and see a vision of loveliness. Then, before his very eyes the vision would vanish, and he would spend the rest of his life driving down country lanes, searching for the beauty goddess of the night.

Our driveway was flanked on either side by tall, thick bushes. On the south edge of the yard was a street light, and if I stood just beyond the shadows of the hedge, the wind would tug at the hem of my toga, and the light would shimmer and dance on the fabric, so it was there that I struck a dramatic, beauty goddess style pose and waited. When the first car passed, my human sensibilities dragged me back into the shadows. But then my fourteen year old, overactive imagination reasserted itself, and chastising myself for cowardice, I returned to my post.

Within moments it happened. The victim sped past while I stood motionless, stiffened by resolve, smiling with determination. He looked up; then his face blurred as astonishment distorted his features. The tires squealed in surprise as the brakes locked up and then, to my horror, my victim threw the car into reverse and began backing down the road towards me.

Resolve fled, and so did I. It would have spoiled the effect if I had run straight in at the front door, so like a true vision of mystery, I disappeared into the shadows at the side of the house. I dashed in the back door, shut it tightly, then ran and did the same to the front door. Then I positioned myself at the window in the dark and watched as the car drove slowly back and forth past my house. Eventually, he gave up, and having had my fill of excitement for the night, I went up to bed.

But I couldn't sleep. After lying in bed forever, staring at the ceiling, I got up again and went downstairs. I went into the kitchen and did the dishes, and I was just finishing up when I got that feeling. It was the feeling that starts between the shoulder blades and makes the hair at the back of the neck stand up, the feeling that comes to people who stay up alone at night in a big, half-empty house, the feeling that whispers cold at the ear, "You are not alone!"

I know how to combat this feeling. I do the rounds. That means going from room the room, turning on the light, looking around, turning off the light, going to the next room. This is effective because I already know, up there beyond the reach of night-time adrenalin, that I really am alone except for the sleepers. I just need reassurance.

So I began the rounds: from the kitchen to the bathroom, down the back hall to Dad's study, (so far so good), through the big open living room and dining room, past the stairs and front hall on the left, the front door on the right, to the spare....

Even as my hand reached out to push open the spare room door, I paused astonished, looking at the front door, the same front door that I had pulled so tightly shut just a silent, dark hour before, the front door which now stood open a telltale crack.

Apparently the thudding of my heart deafened me to the call of sense because I did not run away up to my safe and quiet bed, nor did I run away to hiss in a terrified whisper at my Father's bedroom door. I did not even run away at all. I stood, quite still, my pulse thundering in my ears, my fingertips on the door, forever.

Then I pushed it open....

While on the other side, another hand held it closed.

To this day I can still feel my eyes bulging in fear, I can feel the rush of air into my body, I can feel my mouth shaping the scream, the scream that never found a voice as the door was suddenly snatched away from my hand and opened wide.

And there he stood, red-faced and gasping my name.

No, not The Victim.

My sister's boyfriend.

"C" series – D

Debra Dunkel



First Place Essay

The Chestnut Wars

Ben Chartier

Back when I was a young lad in Marine City, there were many tests to prove one's manhood. Among these were Kamikaze bike crashes, death-defying tree climbs, and the most prestigious of them all - the chestnut wars. The chestnut wars tested endurance, strength, and the raw ability to succeed in adverse conditions. A chestnut warrior must possess many qualities. He must have the agility of a cheetah, the strength of a lion, and the cunningness of a fox. These wars were not always pretty, so for those who have a weak stomach, I suggest that you read no further.

I meander down the street on a brisk autumn day. As I look up, I notice the fruitful chestnut tree looming in the horizon. At the bottom of the tree lies an endless supply of weapons. I begin to reap my harvest, collecting only choice chestnuts, which will suit my purpose. Each chestnut must be solid with a vast number of spikes protruding from its green outer shell. After filling my knapsack, I return home. I don my gloves and heavy clothing, hop on my bike, and head to the forested lot behind Lester's Party Store. This shall be the battleground, where men are made, and egos are crushed. The stage is set, war is inevitable.

On the way to the battle field, I meet up with my comrades Dustin Mackey, Kevin Wilmoth, and our exalted leader, Robby LaParl. Each of us is deadly in our own right, and as a team, we are unsurpassed. After discussing our strategy, we proceed on to the battlefield. Upon arrival, we camouflage our bikes, and disperse immediately, knowing that our foes had already taken their battle positions. We attack in our T-formation: Robby at point, Dustin and Kevin flanking wide, and me circling around and attacking from the rear. Making my way quickly through the woods, I soon find myself at the center of their fortress. I reach into my pouch, carefully take out a chestnut, and cautiously step into the clearing. I scan for the enemy, but they are nowhere to be found. "They chickened out," I thought to myself. Then, like a bolt of lightning, a bear-like paw swept across my head, hurling me to the ground. I heard a demonic laugh, and rolled over to identify my attacker. It was Don Gardner, the fattest and strongest kid in Marine City. I tried to scream, but fear struck the words from my mouth. Looking toward his feet, I noticed that I had dropped my sack of chestnuts. Luckily, I still had one in my hand. I knew that this throw would have to be perfectly aimed. I cocked my arm, and like David I hurled my chestnut at Goliath. Then, I heard a gut wrenching scream. I looked and saw my chestnut buried in Don's forehead. Knowing that he would only be stunned for a second, I ran for my bike, and pedaled home as quickly as possible. I walked confidently through the kitchen door, and told my mom of my heroic deeds, upon which I was sent to my room, and grounded for a week. I was told to think of what I could have done to him.

Looking back at that day, I realize that I was not in the wrong, because what I did was done in self-defense. I could have just sat back and got pummeled by Don like the many, and I mean many times before, but I didn't. For the first time I fought back, and successfully defended myself. At that moment, an enormous sense of pride rushed through my body, and I realized that I was truly a chestnut warrior.

First Place Art

Embrionic Cellular Activity

Jason Roda



Richard J. Colwell

November 22, 1928–February 21, 1992

For over twenty-five years, Richard Colwell taught a variety of English courses here at St. Clair County Community College. He helped establish technical writing courses, went into area businesses and industry to teach principles of effective writing, and taught creative writing to both senior citizens and gifted high school students. In addition to being department chairman in English, he was a most supportive and enthusiastic supporter of *Patterns*, encouraging students to submit their work and serving as reader and judge for hundreds of entries each year.

Richard was a warm and humorous human being who enriched his college and his community. He was a "character" in the best sense of the word. His unusual ties, his many shades of green on St. Patrick's Day, his generous gifts to people, and his great story-telling endeared him to so many. In the community he was a tireless worker for the rights of senior citizens and an active Lion who eventually became the State Governor of Michigan Lions. He was particularly proud of the Lions' work on behalf of the Michigan Eye Bank and Research Center in Ann Arbor, as well as the Leader Dog and Welcome Home for the Blind programs of the Lions' Club.

A teacher, a community service worker, a reader, Richard Colwell was also a family man. He spoke with great pride and love about his wife Iris, his son John, his daughter Jill and their families.

Richard J. Colwell Award

In the years Richard J. Colwell taught English at PHJC/SCCCC, for him every student became a special person, someone whose individual writing skills could be shaped with loving interest to help that student succeed whether in Richard's freshman courses, his technical writing classes, or his beloved creative writing class. Richard delighted in story-telling, and he was one of the best on campus. He wrote right along with his students, openly sharing his work with them and his colleagues. He always looked into the students' own work to teach, his words of advice and his bold probing pen unearthing ideas and phrases to revise into something meaningful both to the writer and the reader. In his memory, the Richard J. Colwell Award has since 1993 been given to the student whose short story is determined by the judges to be the most innovative.

Pen in Hand

Rachelle A. Davis

Erasing, crossing, correcting, scratching,
Ripping, Folding, crumpling, trashing,
Muttering, moaning, musing, mussing,
Swearing, screaming, crying, cussing,
First draft, second draft, third, fourth, fifth
Let them fools believe that myth

That writing is as easy as pen in hand
When in truth it's much harder than
Standing on toes and touching the sky,
Pulling down clouds that whirl and whisp by,
Sliding down rainbows and splashing in gold,
Embracing the oceans to wrinkle and fold.

To write is to lift the sun on my shoulders
To feel sweat on my back as my images smoulder,
Igniting to flames that leap 'cross the page
To liberate the feelings from within my heart's rage.

Lamplighter

Susan Bryant



Creative Writing, Cold Weather; and Mostly Tracey

William Spencer

It is the question my brain
Has been fidgeting with for extended hours
Will I win the acclaim of
The word master?
How long will my feet take to thaw
As they grow blue and crack
Like the snow
Will I see you today?
My Venus, Savior of Conversation
A grand remedy for my lonely words
And what about your acclaim?
For younger days, there in the hallways,
Proved silent as we were yet strangers
But you built on my face a temple
A smile
In my faculties you conceived a memory
And now too often you come knocking at
My window under the shadow of the Lark
Here in my soul you resurrected my hopes
And I am forced to dream of you
Warmth and morning embrace
Tearful secrets shared that I wipe from your face
Even splinters, asp like in nature
That we send to each other via our mouths
Mouths that breath fragile oaths and promise
Mouths to kiss when night draws blinds of passion
A mouth controlled by a mind that celebrates you
A mouth too afraid to speak words like these....

First Place Art

Do Not Scorn the Unicorn Horn

Kevin Erickson



Tender Bar Junction

Gina Maria Tucker

All mingled
Mangled together

Low lives
No lives
Wastes of lives
High lives

Out for a little fun without the wives

Swaying
Staggering
Mocking

Old country songs about

Low lives
Lost wives
Dog dies
Wrists to knives

Unaware - couldn't care
That the song is dedicated to them

From behind the bar she listens
As cigarette smoke glistens
in the sweat within her wrinkles

Oh so attentively to the woes
Of those friends and foes
and laughter
after
gratuity tinkles the jar

Mind-boggled-beer-goggled
In love with any pied-piper of the drunken bliss

The friends and foes
Lovers and ho's
Rich and Po'

All mingled
Mangled
Dangled

From the feathers of a cocktail

Bar rails
Rusty nails

Wine and ale

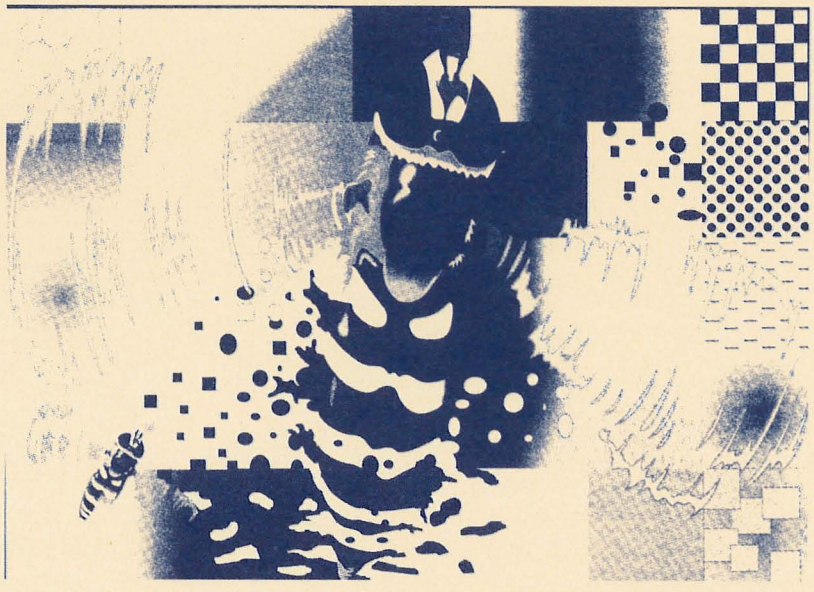
LAST CALL!

Before we all
Fall

From the plane of intoxication
To the hard ground of hangoverfication

Raw Fusion

Kevin Sanderson



Founder of Patterns

Blanche Redman

November 14, 1901 – September 30, 1994

Blanche Redman retired from St. Clair County Community College in 1969 and returned to her home state of Iowa where she continued to write and inspire others in their writing for another 25 years through her active involvement in several writers' groups and the Iowa Poetry Association. During these years she also continued to read and delight in the creative expression of SCCCC students published each year in *Patterns*. The 25th edition was dedicated to her and contained her reminiscence on "*Patterns* and How It Grew" and a few of her own poems.

Blanche, who taught English and German, founded *Patterns* in 1958 in response to student writers whose talent she recognized and nurtured, and with the support and encouragement of Dean James Browning, then chief administrator of Port Huron Junior College. Because Blanche not only believed in nurturing the creativity of others but in letting others know about it, she sent out copies of *Patterns* to teachers of creative writing at various colleges and universities, like the University of Iowa and the University of Michigan, and proudly reported the words of praise they sent her.

Her own accomplishments as a writer are extensive, and her poetry and feature articles appeared in a wide variety of publications in Iowa, Wisconsin, Indiana, Oregon, Georgia, Kansas, California, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Michigan. Among the more recent special recognitions she received were having her poems in honor of Emily Dickinson published by the Amherst Society, receiving the Golden Poet Award from the World of Poetry, receiving several first place awards in the Mississippi Valley Poetry Contest, being named Poet of the Year twice by the Iowa Poetry Association, and being nominated for Who's Who in American Education. The Writers Studio in Iowa announced plans to hold a poetry contest in memory of Blanche shortly after her death.

An early notable achievement for her was serving as Iowa State Chairman for AAUW in the Search for New Deal Art, locating works under the Federal Art Projects of the 1933-1943 depression years. Among those she located are the famous Grant Wood murals at the Iowa State University in Ames, the children's room of the Des Moines Public Library, and 60 original charcoal sketches which have found a permanent home at the Smithsonian.

Her frequently published poem, "First, Take One Red Ripe Tomato," won many awards and was also published in the Silver Anniversary edition of *Patterns*. In her honor and to her memory, fellow poet and friend, Dick Stahl, wrote a poem entitled "The Lady of Language" which ends with these lines:

and, like a child, she drank
deep as Keats
or Hopkins, writing
how the sweet and red and warm
juice flavored her poetry, "I think it did, " she would say,
I know it did.

Her own words in the famous tomato poem perhaps serve best as her own penned epitaph:

> Today I winked at God, and He winked back at me,
> I think He did.

Blanche Redman Poetry Award

This award is in memory of Blanche Redman, founder of *Patterns*, a respected teacher and an accomplished writer. Many of her poems were published and praised for their unique structure, rhythm, tone, and imagery. These are the very same qualities that form the criteria for this award, first given in 1996.

Tarnished Silver

Chris Dalton

It is a cold day to work in the garden. The ground gives stubborn resistance to the "whish-thug" of a persistent shovel disinterring its bowels. The growing season is long over, but the harvest still yields many a delectable meal with the staples he grew from seeds. I watch his gnarled, mottled hands swing the weeds to one side. He bends painfully to wrench those remaining few which have grown deep enough to qualify for squatter's rights. This is, after all, his land, and the garden became his colicky infant of sun and sufficient rainfall.

He stops to swab his reddened face, networked with a hundred worry lines he attributes to his children. A chilling rain has started to fall, and an autumn wind sends leaf piles into swirling, golden whirlpools. The digging is resumed with comparable tenacity. It is growing dark sooner now, and the soft teasing rays of an October afternoon have long since stilled to violet twilight. I know he will toil far beyond any reasonable length of time. I hear the grinding stone sharpening his axe to cut the pungent cords he feeds his wood stove downstairs. The air is permeated with the sweet smell of cherry, and the smoke-house acridness of hickory. One task after another is dutifully performed to his peculiar standards.

Many hours later, the "stomp-clomp" of his boots bang loudly through the back door. I hear a long, weary sigh as his coat is hung on it's rightful peg, and his cap is placed over that. His breathing is hoarse and hitching. I think it is the saddest thing I have ever heard. We are reminded of our own short, sweet mortality when we hear the labored breaths of a bone-tired soul.

I know he is hungry, and I offer a steaming bowl of vegetable soup I have made from his garden's bounty. We eat our meal together and talk of nothing. He says very little of the woman who has been his life's blood for nearly 50 years. His every move is performed with the deliberate solicitude of an anguished stranger. Reaching for his coffee cup, the huge, leathery hand shakes. The cup is replaced too abruptly in the saucer, and I stare at the floor, awkwardly silent. He is a victim of retirement, and my heart aches to see him so lost. He and I know of his arcane anarchy. He had been a skilled tradesman for decades. The union meetings, of which he was a steward, and the labor conflicts and ensuing strikes, have all long since been resolved, reluctantly so, on his part.

The handkerchief that wiped the sweat off his brow earlier, now daubs the lenses of his glasses, then finally, the soft brown eyes I have known all my life. "She'll be okay," I volunteer. He does not reply. His thoughts are gone from me now and are his alone. He sees the smallish woman with the copper hair dancing near the lake that night. He feels his heart race, as her cat-green eyes are on him when he haltingly approaches her door. He knows how his pulse thumped in his temples the day he asked her to be his wife. He feels the hot, angry tears of his newborn daughter, as he cradles the life he helped create.

I know he thinks these things, and I know he grieves with remorse at every unkind word, and unattained promise. "We'll go tomorrow," I say to the night. He nods his head slowly, stirring from his

private reverie. She would want me to care for him, as he feels the need to comfort me. “Tomorrow is time enough,” he agrees, “she’s always had to wait for me.”

Later, after hot showers, and hot rum toddies, I rise from my chair near the fire, and step over to him sleeping peacefully in his recliner. "Daddy," I whisper, "it’s time to call it a day." He takes each step in a plodding, heavy gait. I am saddened to realize both my parents have become older. Something we hate has hospitalized my mother 60 miles away. A lonely heart is ailing my father, and each day without her is his living hell.

As I put out the fire and turn out the lights, my eye catches their wedding picture framed on the wall. I pause and smile, thinking of young hearts dreaming, and untethered vows. Somehow, I have failed to see that the silver frame has tarnished.

Spring

Charles Riffenburg IV



April 15th

Joe Ann Burgett

It's tax day and they have an appointment,
their worldly goods have been divided and the divorce is pending
it's all over including the shouting....

she's lost 65 pounds since she last saw him,
so she puts on her make-up carefully
and dresses in her best—so he will eat his heart out....

the accountant doesn't know what to say
after fifteen years of helping them
keep their affairs in order, now they have fallen apart...

the paper work completed and signed
she puts on her coat and gets ready to leave
recognizing the desire burning in his eyes....

"hey, you look terrific" he smiles
and tries to help her with her coat
"did I ever tell you that you have beautiful brown eyes?"

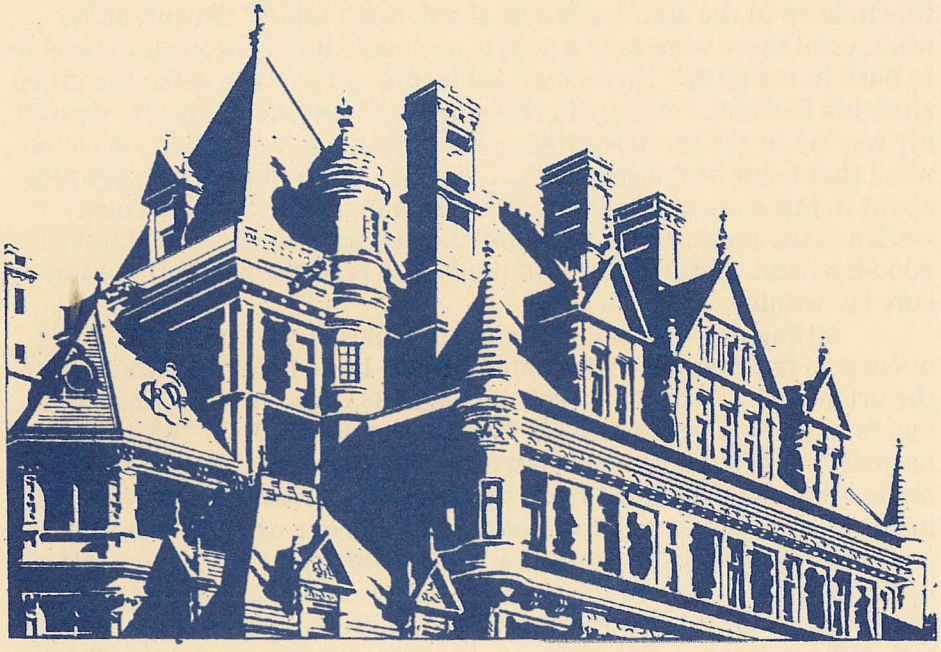
thanks, my eyes are green, dear....

First Place Art

Haunted House

Daishi Iwasa

123



1997 Thirty-ninth Edition

Murder Revised

Rachel Ward

Larry Smith stood at the blackboard in front of the class, lecturing about the notes he had written there at the beginning of the hour. Since I had already copied them down, my eyes drifted out the window, to the computer building. Any second now, Vinnie would come walking out, as he did every Tuesday and Thursday at eleven o'clock. He was so dreamy.

Mr. Smith began passing back the short stories we had turned in last week. I was anxious to get mine back. I knew I had a bestseller on my hands, or at least a first place entry for "Threads," the school anthology that was published every year. As he called out the names of the various students in class, he made little comments about their work. I was dying with anticipation. I could not wait to hear his praise in front of the whole class.

"Ruby, here's yours. Great title! Dale, good imagery; I felt like I was right there with the S.W.A.T. team. Jake, I want an extra copy of this to keep in the staff bathroom if you don't mind!" On and on he went, until there were only a couple of people left. How would I be able to bask in the glory? Then I realized he did not want to make the other students feel bad. Once again reassured and confident, I nearly danced my way up to get my masterpiece when my name was called. So elated was I that I almost missed the fact that Mr. Smith did not say anything about it, but instead, reminded the remaining students about next week's assignment. My heart stopped dead, for a minute, but I waved good-bye, and ventured out into the hall to read the praise that I was sure lay within.

Sitting down at one of the many tables at the end of the hall, I opened to the first page with bated breath. I nearly fainted when I saw the bright red "C-" at the top of the page. As I read the marginal comments, my blood began to boil. "What is the point here?" "Where is this headed?" "O.K., You can start anytime:" Red ink marred my beautiful manuscript of which I had been so proud. I was ready to cry. The final insult came at the very bottom of the page: "Your writing definitely needs work. While your poems have great imagery, your fiction gets lost in the flowery prose you try to create moods with. I can see what you are trying to do, but it is not working. You probably have a real gem of a story here, but I could not find it. Try the exercises on page 174-176 of the textbook. Then, try rewriting and see what happens."

How dare he! I was enraged, insulted, furious! What does he know anyway? I asked myself. "Those who can, do, and those who can't, teach" as the saying goes. Obviously, he can't write; that is why he is teaching a class. Stephen King he definitely isn't.

My internal ranting continued for a little while longer, but then an idea began to grab hold of me. If he did not like my story, then why don't I just create a new story, with Mr. Larry Smith as the leading character. No silly romances this time, either. It was time to try my hand at murder. A Cheshire cat grin spread across my face and I settled back in my seat. At the same time, Mr. Smith passed by the lounge area, and poked his head in. "Getting some ideas for your revision, Rae-Lynn?" he asked.

"Oh yeah, Mr. Smith, most definitely," I replied, disguising the malice in my voice. I wondered if he was able to detect my intentions. I hoped not. I wanted to take him by surprise.
"Great. When you get the revision done, bring it to me, and I'll go over it. If the necessary improvements are made, we'll see about raising that grade a bit, all right?"

Affecting a similarly nonchalant tone, I replied, "You got it, Mr. Smith." To myself I thought, "Boy, is he ever going to get it." I packed up my books and headed towards the library. If I was going to have an accurate and perfect murder, I had some research to do.
A week later, I strolled into class, heart pounding in an irregular rhythm that blended fear and aggressive confidence. I had everything all planned out. Nothing could go wrong.

I approached Larry Smith's desk and smiled sweetly. "Here you go, Mr. Smith. My revision is complete. I really got down deep, and I think I found the gold in this one. I can meet you in your office after class to discuss it, and a change in my grade, if that suits your schedule."

"Sounds great to me, Rae-Lynn. I look forward to reading it, and after class would be perfect. That is, after I go downstairs and get a fresh cup of coffee."

"Tell you what, Mr. Smith. Just to prove there are no hard feelings about the first criticism, I'll go get a coffee for you after class. That way, you will have time to sit and enjoy the new story. Two creams and one sugar, right?" With that, I smiled again, and sat down, my plan going full steam ahead.

My hands were shaking as I emptied the sugar packet into the steaming cup of coffee. I reached into my pocket and pulled out the small paper envelope that Vinnie had acquired for me. One thing I really admired about that guy, he never asked questions. Taking a deep breath to steady myself, I poured the contents of the envelope into the steaming coffee. Being careful not to spill it, I headed towards the English department offices.

Larry Smith was finishing the last page of the last story he would ever read as I walked into his office. As I handed him the steaming cup of coffee, I asked, "Well, what do you think? Did I find the gold?"

Mr. Smith took a deep drink of the coffee and said, "Rae-Lynn, here is your story. I love the ending!" Blinking away the fog of my daydream, I stood up to claim my paper. Emblazoned across the top was a bright red "A."

"I love the surprise ending," said Mr. Smith on my way out. "Keep up the good work. You'll be a great writer one day, as long as you keep at it."

I flashed him my Cheshire cat grin, and headed towards the lounge.

Flower Child

Beverly Wallace



Patrick Bourke

1932–1998

Patrick Bourke, SC4 Dean of Arts, Letters, and Sciences, was a native of Port Huron and began teaching at the College in 1965. He taught English and Art and was instrumental in establishing the vocational program in advertising and design that to this day has played an integral role in the layout and design of each issue of *Patterns*. He organized student and community trips to Chicago, Toronto, Stratford, and Detroit for cultural and educational events. He chaired community concert series, brought Meadow Brook plays to Port Huron, and continually worked to promote and support local art, music, and theater. Dean Bourke was a Renaissance man, working to improve vocational programs in advertising, communications, and nursing and to increase cultural benefits for both college and community in ways too numerous to list.

It was largely through his untiring personal efforts to obtain major contributions during the budgetary crisis of 1980-81 that sufficient funds were raised to preserve the publication of *Patterns*. Out of this was born the Friends of the Arts whose financial contributions have not only guaranteed the continued existence of *Patterns* but have supported and expanded local activities in art, music, and theater. Working closely with Chuck and Betty Muer and their staff at the River Crab, he organized the annual Friends of the Arts Brunch, a major source of funding for Friends of the Arts.

His work on *Patterns* began when he first arrived at the College and helped his close friend and colleague, Eleanor Mathews, by doing the layouts for each issue, a job he either did personally or supervised for over twenty years, during which time he also served on the committee to select the student art to be published. In 1987-88 he worked closely with College and community members to establish the Marge Boal Drama Festival for high school and college students. His dedication and support of education, of arts and letters were marked by his belief and commitment to the community college philosophy of Excellence, Challenge, Accessibility, and Caring.

Patrick Bourke Award

Beginning with the 41st edition of *Patterns* in 1999, the year after Dean Bourke's death, a fund was established to sponsor an annual award in his memory. The Bourke Award is given by the Fine Arts faculty to each year's outstanding Visual Arts student.

A Loud, Haunting Quiet

Amanda Renae Cutler

Seems she came
Out of the womb
Screaming
And didn't stop
For the eighteen years I had her.

She would spend
Whole paychecks on me at Christmas
So I could have the pretty things
I didn't buy for myself—
Haircuts and manicures
Bubble bath and
That crafty country cottage decor
That I know horrifies her.
Going without
The silver frog ring with moveable legs
She'd been craving since last June.
And when I tried to thank her,
She just sniffed and said,
"It's no big deal."

For sixteen of those years,
She took steps beside him
Walking with him
Down her hallowed high school halls
Ignoring the stares
And pretending to not hear
When the teachers whispered,
"He should be
with his own kind."

She pounded out songs on the piano
With determined hands.
She worked diligently —
Practicing, practicing, practicing —
Until
I feared the piano would collapse from exhaustion.
But it stands silent now —
Resting.

Her airy hippie shirts
Have all moved south of here
Packed tightly into cardboard boxes
Labeled plastic spoons.

The familiar sounds of Tori Amos,
Crying out with voice and hands,
No longer dash from her room.
Tori lords quietly

Awaiting the return of her voice
Which has been squeezed between the hippie shirts
For safekeeping.

The stillness,
A surface oasis,
Is louder than yesterday —
Crowding my thoughts with
Regret, still pictures,
And hope that she may have heard my quiet voice
Just once
Through her screams.

"M.M"

Darin Magueson



The Symbol Says Do Not

Linda Mountz

VACANCY. Blink. ADULTERY. Blink. IMMORAL. Blink. AFFAIR. Blink. WRONG. Blink. The words run through Beth's mind, keeping time to the pattern of the vacancy sign blinking through the crack in the curtains. She lies in bed, watching the smoke from his cigarette swirl around, thinking that she can't stand even being in a room when others are smoking, but here she is, not just in a room, but in a bed with someone smoking.

The vacancy light continues to flash outside the window while her thoughts drift away from the smoke. This is the third time they've actually been together, the third motel they've taken a room at. If someone had asked her, though, when she thought the affair started, she'd have to say it was the first time she heard him laugh, back at the office party in July. It was always the laughter that she found attractive, not the eyes, smiles, or particular body parts. When she'd scanned the room, trying to tell where the laughing was coming from, she'd spotted him. The laugh was his. And so was the cigarette that he held in his hand. He'd looked up as she'd started to look away and the affair began.

She's brought back to the present by that very same laugh. She sees his underwear hanging on the bathroom doorknob as she realizes he's found something funny on one of the comedy channels, but instead of the laugh being attractive, she finds it ANNOYING. Blink. IRRITATING. Blink. AGGRAVATING. Blink. Her mind is back to keeping time with the
vacancy sign.

For not the first time, she tries to figure out how she's ended up in an affair. It's wrong; she knows that. But what she knows and how she feels are two different things. Up until Derek, what she knew kept how she felt in control. As hard as she tries, she can't figure out what was different this time.
His voice cuts through her thoughts. "Hey, Hon, hand me the ashtray from your nightstand."

Great, she thinks. I wonder how many cigarettes it'll take to fill this one up? Reaching over, she finds the ashtray, upside down. Her hand brushes her wedding ring, almost knocking it off the nightstand. While picking them both up, she realizes there's a sticker on the bottom of the ashtray. Turning it over, she sees the universal symbol for "Do Not Smoke." Beth hands him the ashtray, slips on her wedding ring, and gets out of bed to dress. The sign outside the window blinks VACANCY.

Thrilled

Joel Vile



Just When

Heather Herrmann-Miller

She got the cactus for one dollar.
I know this because I had seen it,
on clearance at the hardware shop,
the day before

"I think it's cool," she said and I
agreed, sucking my picked finger silently
while I climbed into her car and we
drove over a slick, black, lake to
an out of town bar to get drunk together.

She only told me she loved me when she was drunk,
and I bought her bad black coffee after, at the
twenty-four hour donut place, on the way home.
Her lipstick smeared off the line of perfect purple lips,
eyeliner smeared also, a black pool beneath black eyes;
but I watered the cactus every day.

I wasn't exactly sure what it or she needed,
not since we were twelve and singing into
stolen wooden spoons.
Now the karaoke bar seems so much scarier,
using my real voice and all,
echoing throughout a thick-smoke room,
no one listening, not really,

voice loud against the slurred clatter of bottles
and her screaming, "you're great - I love you,"
days later, after I knocked the cactus
off the shelf
and spilled black dirt onto my
gleaming kitchen floor.

First Place Art

Olivia

Jennifer Weymouth



First Place Poem

What?

Tyler Hill

The old timers stand very near when they talk
They put a hand on your shoulder and you watch the lines in
their face work
Leaning and tilting their heads so words have a direct path into
your ear
You smell Pall Malls, coffee and soap, or the lack of it.

At first it makes you uneasy and you want to turn away
Why are they so close?
You want to step back to escape their breath and have your own space
But they follow.

Then you work near it, the place they've been
Number six paper machine's winder
A fighter plane sounding machine, screaming, whining
Yelling paper at the top of its lungs into nice, tight rolls.

It hammers the ancient brick and metal building,
Vibrating dust and clotted grease until it all floats into
breathable bits
Hand signals have been created from necessity among the crews
And bent visitors pass as if fighting a head wind of sound.

Four guys on number six-four guys on its neighbor, number five
Sixteen ears slowly, eaten away like moths in the trees
Until grandchildren's voices become rounded and dull
And you stare at small mouths to decipher shapeless mumblings.

Every fiscal period or so they come and test us
Hard head phones that don't fit in a moldy mobile testing center
Put your hand in the air at the sound OF A BEEP
Of A Beep
of a beep

Orthonell

Lindsay Hayosh



Leaving

Sharon Warren

Acorns in abundance, my feet skid over them on the downhill path. Walking alone at night, I start to hear them. Falling like great solid raindrops bouncing against the cement street. Cracking underfoot, their phallic heads severed—the meat, the heart of them now spilled forth.

The gas lamps cast my silhouette again then again. My shadow resting yet rising from the sidewalk, mottled by the surrendered seeds, symptom of some lethal disease or defect. Nearing the lake, the Big Dipper lies on the horizon nearly scooping into the still, black water.

A pilot boat, red and blue light blinking, turns back from a freighter. The ship goes on silently unafraid. Into the darkness, into the stars. Hurrying to remove my clothes and shoes, the metal of the jetty is cold. but the water will be warmer. A boundless bath of history and possibility.

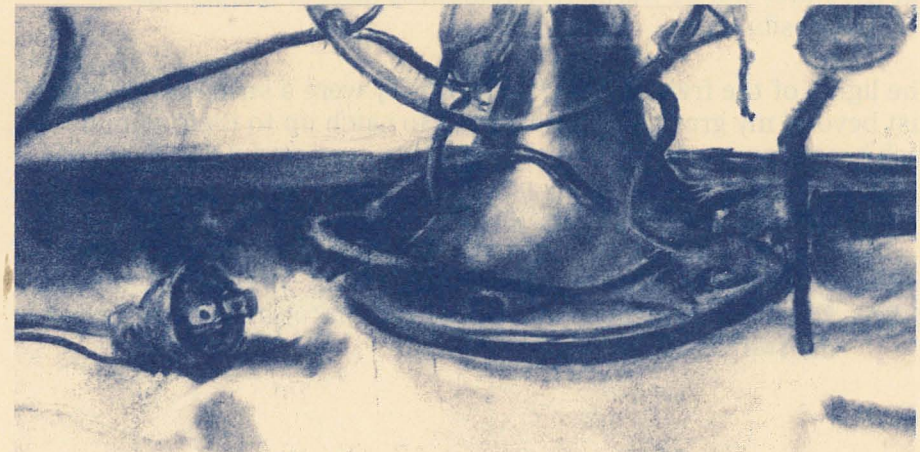
The lights of the freighter beckon as if they were a string of sapphires just beyond my grasp. Swimming hard to catch up to their shimmering, each breath over-echoing breath. Algae tugs and undulates from my hips like some mermaid's gala pubic skirt. The ladder is rusted and scrapes the skin of my fingers.

I cling to the side of this massive mechanical whale, waiting...Waiting to be taken over the edge of this saltless sea. Into the darkness, back to the stars.

First Place Art

Fan Reflection

Mary Perrin



Kathleen Nickerson
April 10, 1946–June 13, 2002

Kathy Nickerson was an enthusiastic teacher. She felt deeply about literature, read voraciously, and carried her love of the written word into the classroom. Her joy in the well turned phrase was unbounded, and it was not unusual to see her rush out of her office, hand on breast, to breathlessly share a fine piece of student writing. Poetry was a passion and her favorite part of any literature class. Kathy could wax poetic about metaphoric language, making sure that students' understanding went far beyond surface meanings. As a teacher, she expected a great deal of her students, but never more than she, herself, gave to the class. Kathy entered each class prepared to teach twice as long as the time allowed; thus, each semester, she warned her students that she talked fast and expected sharp listening skills. She kept current with new thinking about her craft, frequently participating in conferences and classes. The summer before her illness was diagnosed, Kathy attended a conference in Toronto where it was suggested the participants read 50 books prior to the Children's Literature sessions. She readily complied and shared the experience with her students when she returned.

Kathy was dedicated to our college and participated in many areas. She was active on committees in her own English department, but also immersed herself in committees and events of the entire campus. She was involved in Professional Development, MAHE, *Patterns*, and the Wellness Committee. Kathy and her husband, Bob, regularly attended art shows, band concerts, plays, and basketball games, offering support to her students and fellow faculty members. Connections with people were immensely important to her, and she had many friends among the staff. Kathy enjoyed the SC4 gatherings where she could be heard asking people about current projects, trips taken during school breaks, an ill spouse. Staff held her in high esteem, steering family and friends into her classes. As well, a legion of students became friends because Kathy cared about them. When a student came into her office, the talk would proceed from questions about a piece of literature or a paper in process to inquiry about the individual's other classes, family, and work. She remembered friends' special moments with notes, cards, and gifts.

While we miss her and all that she meant to our lives, Kathy remains with us through remembrance of her gifts to us: her love of life, literature, and people. We can well imagine that she would be an enthusiastic attendee of the *Patterns*' reception, chatting with students, enjoying the presentations and awards. In the coming week, Kathy might be found rushing out of her office to share a poem from *Patterns* or point out a piece of artwork that moved her. Her joy transcends, and we are all enriched by our connection to her memory.

The Kathleen Nickerson Poetry Award

In 2004, as the 46th edition of *Patterns* was under way, it was

discovered that the endowment funding the Blanche Redman Poetry Award had been exhausted. Having just lost our dear colleague, Kathy, the year before (the 45th edition was dedicated to her), the *Patterns* staff decided to rename our annual poetry award in Kathy's honor. Each year since then, the Nickerson Award has been given to the student showing the most outstanding work in the genre of poetry for that year.

Slow Leak

Grace Vermeer

The man waited in the boat, a tackle box and rod beside him, his hat casting a shadow over his eyes. A galvanized bucket full of bait sat between his feet. He opened a small, white packet and sprinkled it into the bucket.

"What's that?" the woman said.

"Bait Saver," said the man. "It reduces stress; keeps the shiners alive. They're sensitive when it's hot like this."

"Sensitive? Shiners are sensitive? Oh, that's sweet." She turned her back to the man, stuffed her hands in her hip pockets and looked over at the green, stagnant scum floating along the edge of the water.

"Hey. Kathy! You coming or not?" The man pushed his hat back. His hair was wet where the rim of his hat had been.

She turned and walked toward the boat. "I'm coming, but I still think this boat's a piece of junk."

The boat lurched and she clutched the side, plopping down on the weathered plank.

"Good grief!" She jerked her hand away and glared at the splinter embedded in her thumb. "What'd I tell you? The wood's practically rotten."

"I said, it'll be fine, dear."

The man picked up the oars and began to row out across the expansive lake. The air was hot and oppressive, an anxious heat before a storm. The woman sighed and wiped her forehead. She peered over the edge of the boat, dragging her fingers along the surface of the deep murky water, the path of ripples spreading out behind her, the oars dipping and scraping.

"There it is," said the man. "The perfect spot." A fallen tree was toppled in the deep water beneath the brushy bank. "Crappies like flooded brush."

"Your father called them papermouths," she said. "Remember that, Bill? Or bachelor perch."

The man stopped rowing and let the boat drift, shifting his back towards the woman.

"Oh my gosh," said the woman, lifting her feet. "The boat's leaking."

He rigged his pole with a small float, split shot, and a simple hook baited with a shiner. "It's fine, dear," he said flatly.

"Stop it. Stop calling me 'dear.' You only say that when you want me to shut up."

He fixed his eyes on the fallen tree. "Be quiet. You'll scare the fish." The problem was this. Crappies shied away from any strange disturbance. Technique was critical: keep your distance, avoid inessential movements or noise and use the lightest line possible.

"We've been through this before. You know you never say it unless you want me to shut up." She picked up the tote bag by her feet. "The bottom's all wet."

"Don't worry about it," he said. "It's leaked for years."

The woman shaded her eyes and squinted across the pond. A

kingfisher swooped low, its harsh, shrill call rising above the incessant drone of insects.

"Look," he said. "If you're worried, I'll row you to shore. You can wait there."

"I'm not worried." She glanced down at her feet, picking at her nails.

The boat drifted toward the brush. There was another problem with crappies. They liked to hide in the thick, dense branches. Snags were a constant problem. The man used a long pole and dropped the bait precisely into the opening without getting snagged. He smiled to himself. You're good, Bill. Years of practice, man. He looked over his shoulder at his wife. She was staring at the wet boards.

"You can't tell if it's leaking by staring at it," he said. "It's just a slow leak."

The woman reached back and gathered her hair, lifting it off her wet, sticky skin. She tilted her face up toward the sweltering sky. It refused to be ignored. The clouds were massing heaps; white, swelling caravans against brazen blue, a changing entourage.

"Cumulous clouds."

"What?" he said.

"It might storm tonight," she said.

Along the banks of the lake, the birch trees hung limp and mute, bent over their listless reflections. The water had risen over the years, swallowing the edges of the dark, lush woods. Now there were trees standing in the water, some bare and gray.

"They're dying," she said.

"What?" He watched a crappie, motionless.

"The trees," she said. They're drowning." The raucous scolding of a blue jay rang out over the lake.

"How long does it take?" she asked.

"Hmmm?" he said.

"How long does it take for a tree to drown, when it stands in water like that?"

"Don't know," he said. "Maybe years. Could be less."

The woman bit her lower lip and stared at the trees, the ones that were dead. They lifted their arms like pointless, old prophets. She shaded her eyes and looked back at the clouds. She sat quietly and watched them move and change.

"I used to like painting clouds," she murmured. "But that was a long time ago."

"Damn fish. They're not biting at all." He put fresh bait on his hook and lowered it carefully. It was important to lower the bait right in front of the crappies, or sometimes they refused to bite.

"You don't listen to me, do you?"

"What?" he said.

"You've never really listened to me, have you?"

"What are you talking about?" A mosquito whined in his ear and he slapped at it, rocking the boat and sending little eddies across the water.

"I don't know why I keep lying to myself." She swiveled around and glanced down at the bottom of the boat. The water had risen, ever so slightly.

"OK. That's it," he said. "I'm finding a different spot." He drew in his line and propped the rod beside him.

"Why don't you just row me to shore while you're at it?"

"Why? What's the matter?"

"Nothing's the matter," she said. "I just want you to row me to shore."

"You still worrying about the stupid, little leak?"

"No," she said and looked away in the distance. "Not that one, anyway."

The sun hung low in the sky, a big ball of fire in the stifling air.

"I'll row over to the north shore," he said. "There should be good fishing along that brushy strip.

"I want to go back to the dock."

"What for?" he said.

"Just row me to the dock," she said. She stared at him and then looked down at the water, running the tips of her fingers along the surface. She could see the billowing clouds in the reflection.

"It'll be cooler on the north side of the lake."

"Tell me," she said. "When have you ever taken me seriously?"

"What? I always take you seriously."

She reached for the oars.

"Whatever," he said, and rolled his eyes.

She rowed across the lake without speaking. The boat clunked against the dock, scraping along the side. She gathered her bag and shoes, hanging onto the side of the boat as she stepped out.

"Goodbye," she said, without looking at him. She walked up the grassy slope toward the pickup truck.

He looked puzzled. "Where you going? I thought you wanted to wait on the dock?"

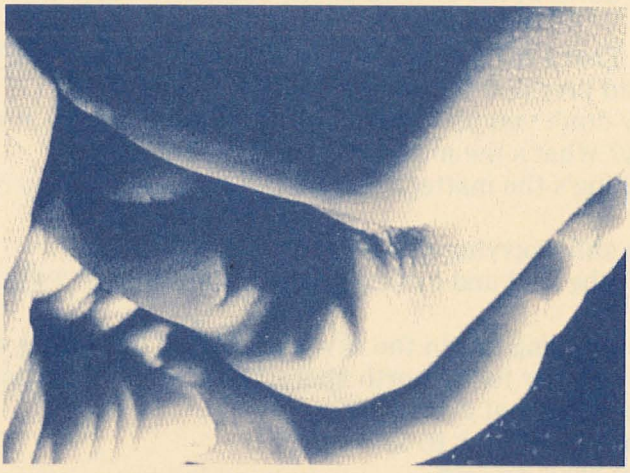
"I'm going to paint clouds."

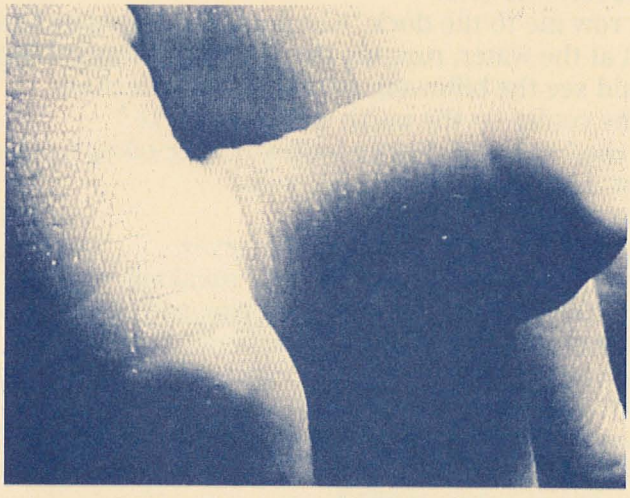
"Well, make sure you pick me up by ten," he yelled as she opened the door of the truck and started to climb in.

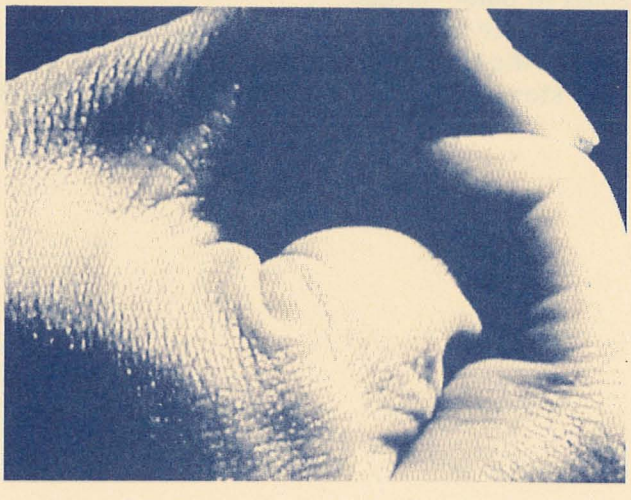
When the storm broke loose at midnight, he started walking.

Emotion in Motion

Catherine Steinborn







Queen-Sized

Amy Clark

Amanda sits flipping through the channels on her cozy oversized couch. With a sigh, she blows a strand of hair from her face as she flips passed "The Real World," "Days of Our Lives," and "The Maury Show." I have seen enough drama for one day. Dropping the remote on the floor, she looks at her left hand. She slowly touches her bare finger. Closing her eyes, she breathes in the cool winter air. Shivering, she pulls her fluffy blanket higher towards her neck. Hugging it close to her chest, she attempts to fend off the frigid night air.

A noise from the other room breaks the silence. She listens intently, but without the slightest hint of alarm. The door creaks shrilly as it is closed. Despite the intruder's entrance, Amanda remains on the couch beneath her snug haven.

Upon entering the house, Adam kicks his old worn-out boots next to a pair of dressy flats, placed neatly in a line against the wall. When passing the dining room, he glances quickly at the half melted candles on the dining room table. Without thinking very much about them, he trudges into the television room in hopes of finding something decent on T.V. to fall asleep to.

As he rounds the corner he hears a small voice from the couch on which he had planned to rest.

"Hi, honey. Where have you been?"

"I was just at Dylan's house." He replies, slouching instead on an old Lazy Boy.

"Did you two have fun?"

"Sure."

"Well, what did you guys end up doing?"

"Oh you know. We just hung out," he says, tossing his baseball cap onto the floor next to him.

"What time did you go over to see him?" she asks sitting up to look at him.

"I've been over there since I left this morning."

"Oh, but I thought you had to work this morning," she says with a slight hesitation. "I assumed you were coming home sooner."

"Did I say that? He asks while grabbing at the cat's tail next to his chair, waking it from its peaceful sleep. "Well, Dylan needed my help with something at his house," he adds in short spurts while still picking and laughing at the aloof kitten.

"What did you help him do?"

Pausing, he looks at her, "Why do you keep asking so many questions? You act as if you don't trust me."

"Well, sure I trust you. I was trying to have a conversation with you. I just wanted to know how your day was."

"It was good." Looking her in her eyes for the first time that night, Adam quickly adds, "I helped him fix his heater."

"That was nice of you. What made you decide to help him?

"He's my friend. Can't I do something nice for a friend?" he asks accusingly as he throws himself back into his recliner, flipping the foot rest out to plop his legs on.

"Well, of course you can. I never said you couldn't," she adds in her soft voice and looks down at her hands once again. She begins to caress the palm of her hand softly with her fingertips, rounding to touch the back of each knuckle.

"Honey, could you get me my sweater out of your truck?" she asks without looking up at him.

"What?! You have two legs. Get it yourself. Amanda continues to look down at her hands. Seeing her blank response, Adam quickly states, "It is pretty damn cold in here. I'll get your sweater. I have to go get my beer I left out there anyway."

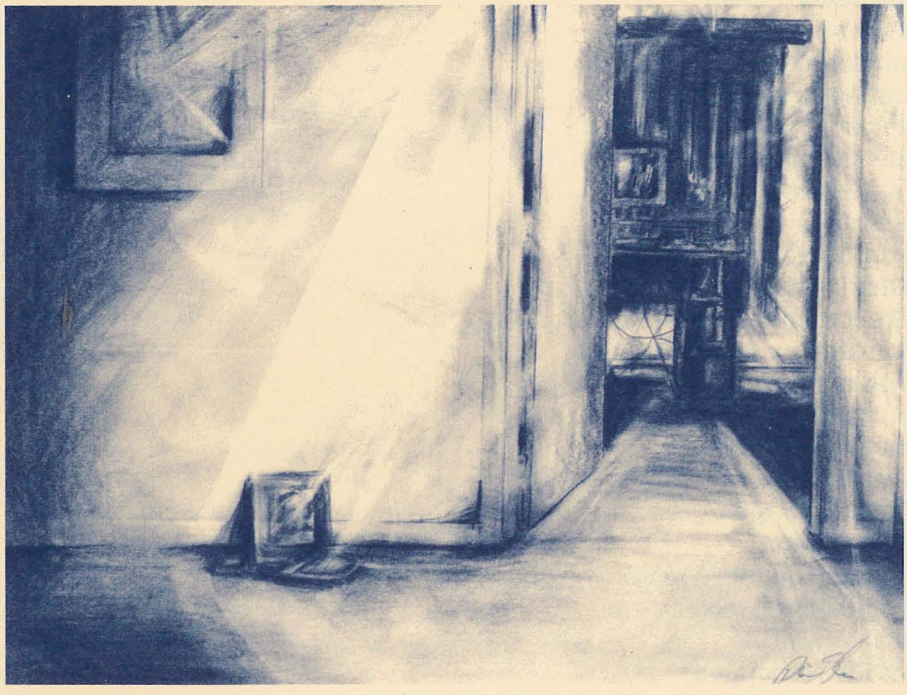
As Adam walks back up the steps with the sweater thrown over his shoulder and his beer in hand, he is careful to avoid the patches of ice sporadically covering parts of the sidewalk. Rubbing his unoccupied hand against his fleece sweater, he attempts to warm it. Reaching the door, he turns the knob only to discover that it refuses to budge.

Amanda cuddles close to feather-filled pillows and inviting blankets on her queen-sized bed. Ignoring the muffled bangs of the front door, she closes her eyes to ponder this name. Smirking, she realizes just how well the name fits.

First Place Art

Discovering the Unknown

Philip Scally



The Photograph

Susan Brusseau

Found in a drawer,
A photograph,
Black and white
With a ragged edge.
A girl 12 or 13
Near a window with the sun-
Beams dappling her face.
That homemade, pink plaid dress
With the hideous
Puffed sleeves and bows,
Those hateful braids,
Like ropes of pitch,
The handles of me
My brothers grabbed.
The shabby chair,
In front of the window
Looking out at Grandma's
Crabapple trees that
We could never climb.
The road out front
That leads away from
Memories of home,
From the life I lived
When I was twelve.
Like a double exposure,
The dreamy face of a child
With a hint of the face
Fifty years would add.
Why was I waiting?
Who or what was coming?
The school bus?
My friends?
Escape from boredom?
From being twelve?
Or just waiting
For life to happen?

First Place Art

Enforcer La Tete

Matthew Jorde



Rave

Joe Kane

Why is it that our eyes shine brighter
In a light called black?
Inhibitions driven into shadows
That dance with their creators.
The music pluses through the night's persona,
As our limbs sway with epileptic grace.
Flickering silhouettes
Against neon radiation.
Hearts beat to the rhythm of the bass line,
Synthesizing memory.
The chaos of life
Spinning at 33 RPMs.
Dazed and sweaty consciousness.
Don't surf the crowd, swim,
Lost in the comfort of anonymity.
Every move is dipped in groove.

First Place Art

Early Morning

Matthew Winkler

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It's A Gift

Eleanor Mathews

The gift given gladly is
the daffodil,
The violet where there is none,
the rose that grows wild.
Duty gifts are the acid-truths,
the bitter chemistry,
The sharp, delaying gift
of conscience saved.
The gift that is good is
the glad gift:
Pansies in a purple bowl,
the red, red rose protected from the wind.

(originally published in the 24th edition of *Patterns*)

We conclude this volume not with a period but a semicolon, you might say, because there is more yet to come. Even as these words are being written, the poetry, stories, essays, and artworks to be published in the second half of the 50th edition have yet to be submitted or selected. Some, perhaps, don't even exist as anything more than glimmers in the minds of our students. The glad gift of their creative expression is one that we will all have to wait for a little longer.

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